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THE THRESHOLD OF THE TEMPLE

Rev. JOHN S. HASTIE, M.A., B.D.



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Errata.

- p. 13, lines 1-2 ; read, " God is, and what."
- p. 22, line 18 ; read " hypochondria."
- p. 54, line 20 ; read " them " for " him."
- p. 56, line 29 ; read " afflicted."
- p. 62, line 7 ; delete ".
- p. 68, line 34 ; read " something."
- p. 86, line 36 ; read " says²" ; fn. to correspond.
- p. 89, line 30 ; reference figure should be² ; fn. to correspond
- p. 93, line 37 ; read " Weinel²," and add at foot of p. ²" N. T. Theol." 125, ff.
- p. 94 ; fn. should simply be—¹" The Gospel and the Church," 54.
- p. 113, line 8 ; read " use."
- p. 122, fn. should be on p. 121.
- p. 130, first fn. ; insert a " before " Christentum," and in next line read " Life."
- p. 131, second fn. ; read " of the."
- p. 161, second fn. ; read " Fact."
- p. 162, line 32 ; delete " the."
- p. 165, line 19 ; read " mother's."
- p. 179, line 1 ; read " gloried."
- p. 202, line 18 ; read " causal."
- p. 223, line 11 ; should read " God that now so many strong men and so many gentle, cult—"
- p. 225, line 39 ; read " ennoblement of the soul."
- p. 243, line 30 ; reference figure should be ² ; fn. to correspond.

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Theology

The Threshold of the Temple,

Studies in the Theology of
the Lord's Prayer.

See Contents

BY THE

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PREFACE.

This book arose out of a series of lectures which I had the honour of giving under the auspices of the Board of Biblical Studies at the University of Liverpool. Some of those who heard the lectures, persons whose judgment I was bound to respect, thought that the studies were valuable enough to be offered to a wider public, and I have acquiesced in their view, hoping that the usefulness of the book may corroborate the estimate of those who were good enough to be pleased with the lectures. Not only has the war delayed the appearance of the book, but it has also so greatly increased the cost of production that, if the price was not to be prohibitive, it was necessary to forego luxuries in paper and type and indexing. The explanation of the title of the book is simple—the book deals with the things which a man must believe before he prays, that is to say, the book is just an expansion of the commonplace that the ‘lex orandi’ is the ‘lex credendi.’ With regard to the sub-title, I would like to say that, although the book professes to deal with ‘theology,’ one who has been preaching for a quarter of a century finds it very difficult to keep homiletics out of his work. Indeed, it appears not unlikely that any readers the book may find will be among those whose business is preaching, and their approval will be extended probably to those pages of frank preaching for which a work in ‘theology’ needs to apologise.

Finally, I have to express my great indebtedness to Mr. R. B. Miller and to the Rev. C. C. Goodlet, M.A., whose constant kindness made the task of publication easy.

J.S.H.

Gosforth, Northumberland,

July, 1920.

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CHAPTER I.

PROLOGUE: THE BEING OF GOD.

The poet has taught us that we would know what God is and, what man is, if we could exhaust the meaning of the tiniest "flower in the crannied wall." The whole facts of the universe hang together in such a closed system that to know any one thing truly would be to know everything. To understand this England, this little land, swinging, like a cradle of nations in the Northern seas, and swaying vast regions in all the continents by her genius for government and trade, would demand a gazetteer of the whole world and an interpretation of the history of our whole race. "What do they know of England who only England know?" Indeed, we would be justified in making our instance more paradoxical—we might say that to map out the most remote pastoral parish in our land would involve, ultimately, charting the whole of the starry spaces. So, we can go on to say, to understand the theological background of so short a document as the Lord's Prayer would really call for something encyclopædic, the full-orbed presentation of all that the long labours of men in their search for God have attempted and achieved. That task, clearly, we must leave to the supermen among the theologians. But it does seem desirable that we should devote some time to the more modest task of finding out whereabouts in the world of thought we are making our start. Before we enter into the palace of prayer, where we are to abide, we ought to spend a while in describing the demesne in which our house of prayer is situated.

All adoration and petition make suppositions of a tremendous sort. No river reaches the ocean, broad with a rolling wealth of waters and tireless in its services for man, unless it have travelled from far watersheds and collected the bounty of many a fair region. And no prayer, rich in its knowledge of God and its promise of hope to men, can take its rise in any sort of intellectual desert. If I use the words

of the Lord's Prayer, if I use any form of supplication whatever, I am taking it for granted that God is, that He has a certain moral character, and that He can and that He does answer to the appeal of my prayer. The disciples who say, "Lord, teach us to pray," are begging that they may be made familiar with the basal principles of the Christian piety.¹ And here again there are momentous assumptions—that there is a Christian piety, that it is attainable, and that its attainment is earth's most enviable felicity. But these assumptions are by no means beyond question. They are the very contentions that provoke and even inflame debate. It is hotly denied that prayer has the least right to make the assumptions about God and the holy life on which it proceeds, and yet, it is clear, without these very presuppositions prayer would be a futility, a deliberate jest, like a string of nonsense-verses. What then is the pious soul to do? Must a man wait till the controversialists settle the long, loud debate about the being and the character of God? Or may a man fall down on his knees to adore and to beseech, untroubled by the fury and the heat of that dispute whose clamour comes to us down the roaring ages?

I. RELIGION, THEOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY.

Immediately we begin to ask such questions we find ourselves using three words, religion, theology and philosophy, and we are compelled to demand some account of them. The first and the last of these three words are difficult of definition, and it would lead to nothing but bewilderment and irritation if we tried to decide which of the many attempts to define religion and philosophy has the best right to be regarded as the final, authoritative formula.

We may see the essence of religion and "the higher unity of religious history" in a body of beliefs which includes three grand propositions, that there is a chief good for man which is attainable, that the attainment is possible through the help of a divine power and that that help is given on the fulfilment of terms that are agreeable to the divine will.² Or we may say that "the trustful sense of community with an unseen but kindred power seems the least which can be

¹ H. J. Holtzmann, "Akademische Predigten," p. 2.

² Prof. W. P. Paterson, "Rule of Faith," p. 183.

called religion."¹ Or we may say that religion is "the absolute self-surrender of the soul to God."² Or meantime, for our own convenience, to get on with the business, we may say that religion means our relation to that Supreme Being who is at once our Creator, our Ruler and our Friend, and that, of course, this subjective relation has involved the use of certain forms and the rise of certain institutions to be the organs of that relationship between men and God.³

Theology is the simplest of the three words which we are reviewing. Theology is the science of religion, "the intellectual presentation of the subject-matter of religion."⁴ In religion there are certain intellectual, emotional and volitional elements, and it is the business of theology to describe these singly and to trace out their interplay.

To come now to the other word, philosophy is nearly as hard to define as religion. One authority tells us that philosophy is "reflection on our ultimate ideas."⁵ Prof. Gwatkin looks at the matter from another point of view. He makes "nature" co-extensive with "science, which deals with sequences only," and he reserves all beyond that for "philosophy, which deals with causes also."⁶ Mr. Balfour, to take another instance, distinguishes between philosophy and metaphysics.⁷ To philosophy he gives an epistemological significance—philosophy is the theoretic justification of our beliefs. Metaphysics, on the other hand, he holds to be "the knowledge that we have, or suppose ourselves to have, regarding realities which are not phenomenal, *e.g.*, God and the soul." We need not vex ourselves with these distinctions between the processes of knowledge and the material on which knowledge works. For our present purpose it will do well enough to say that philosophy is the criticism, the establishment or the overthrow, of the assumptions on which religion is based.

It is rather a non-plus to notice, as we are bound to, that the great religious pioneers and champions have never been professional thinkers. They were men who had had a

¹ Gwatkin, "Knowledge of God," I, 248.

² Caird, "Fundamental Ideas," I, 193.

³ Fairbairn, "Philosophy of the Christian Religion," 200.

⁴ Clarke, "Outlines of Theology," 4.

⁵ Fairbairn, "Phil. Chr. Relig.," 186.

⁶ "Knowledge of God," I, 248.

⁷ "The Foundations of Belief," 7, fn.

mysterious commerce with the eternal world, and their language was never anything else than the description of their high experience. "The greatest religious geniuses"—as Wernle observes¹—"the prophets and Jesus Himself had no relation whatsoever, and the most eminent among the heroes of the faith, like Paul, Luther and Pascal, had only a hostile attitude to philosophy."

But, of course, it is not possible for us to pretend ignorance of the purposes and the pretensions of philosophy. All pose is hateful. To pretend indifference to philosophy would be a very unlovely affectation, and the pose of contempt would be sheer impertinence. Even if we are to take up any hostile attitude, it can be only after we have agitated the whole matter and proved either that the methods of philosophy are vicious, or that its conclusions are illegitimate. If we begin asking bewildered questions, whether a man should follow the usage of faith, whether a man should make the daring leap and break his way into that radiant existence which is promised to faith's venture, or whether a man should wait behind in prudent suspense till philosophy has reconnoitred ahead and ascertained if there is something better than maiming and disaster to reward the adventurer in the realm of faith, these questions can be satisfactorily answered only after we have made some inventory of what philosophy has attempted and achieved in her age-long labours.

(a) Philosophy as the Destructive Criticism of Religion.

We have to note then, first of all, that there is a philosophy which may be called the destructive criticism of religion. Perhaps the most respectable account of this type of criticism is to be found in the system of the philosopher Comte. This distinguished French thinker was persuaded that all attempts to find an explanation of the world had passed through three phases, firstly, a theological, secondly, a metaphysical, and finally, a positive stage, or rather that the cosmic solution had passed through the theological and the metaphysical stages and reached its final satisfaction and rest in the positive philosophy. Theology and metaphysics have been found burdensome and useless. Man ceases to be bothered with gods and with spiritual explana-

¹ "Einführung in das Theologische Studium," 359.

tions of his world. According to Mr. Frederick Harrison, the loyal defender of Positivism, Comte's system amounts to this, that "no absolute certainty, no abstract essence of any kind is possible, or would be of any human utility if it were possible."¹ Man has now to content himself with phenomenal causes. This scheme of Comte was supposed to have the merit of explaining how religion arose, and the explanation of the origin of religion, in the eyes of many persons, was presumed to have explained religion away altogether.

It is notorious that there have arisen, not uninfluenced by Comte, many hurrying critics of religion who were not satisfied with addressing passionate indictments to students in classrooms and to the leisured habitués of the academies, but rushed out pell-mell into the streets and the market-places, wherever the credulous crowds were densest, who provoked the attention, if not the assent, of the commonalty by the fury of their attack on Christianity and by the confident way they had of asserting that all religion is degrading and dangerous superstition. They not merely asked a hearing, but they demanded the reverence due to those who break an ancient and an ignominious bondage. Mr. Robert Blatchford, for instance, asserted that "man made God out of his hopes, his fears and his guesses," and he quotes Mr. Grant Allen, with approval, to the effect that "gods are derived from ghost-worship."²

By way of criticising this destructive philosophy of religion, we may point out that it usually deals in a refreshingly confident way with primitive man, speaking about the dim, rude fathers of our race as if we were their familiars and could describe the last scrap of their mental furniture. It is a pity that Christian apologists, on their part, have been betrayed into absurdities that vie with the nonsense of the ghost-dealers and the taboo-pundits. One writer³ quotes what he calls a "competent" authority in these words. "If we pursue the religious history of the civilisations of antiquity we find in proportion as we ascend into the past a greater approximation to the knowledge of the one loving and holy God in conjunction with a more vivid ethical consciousness of the difference between good and

¹ "The Religion of Common Sense," p. xxvi.

² "God and My Neighbour," 29, 36.

³ Burgess, "Our Father," 17.

evil." It is really difficult to know what men will *not* say, but one would have thought that such a statement ought to have been impossible even to the lowliest intelligence. The plain English on the subject is that we know only a little about the savage man of our own day, and that not merely do we know nothing about the primitive man, but we do not know in what direction to look for information regarding him. It is a voice of sanity which declares, "If savage life is a likeness it must also be a caricature of primitive life, for we have to reckon with the plain fact that primitive man is as much the ancestor of civilised man as of savage man."¹ If we tried to interpret the aboriginal Briton in terms of the modern Tasmanian or Patagonian, we would find ourselves in the same hopeless confusion as if we set about describing the gardens at Kew in terms of the Carboniferous fossils. Nobody has ever shown, or can show, one single instance of what is supposed to have been the common order of development, that is, of a people passing upward by continuous stages from fetishism, or animism, or whatever may be the lowest conjectural culture of our race, to a moral and spiritual view of God and the world.

In the next place, we must warn ourselves that one does not depreciate anything, or explain anything, far less explain it away, by showing the soil and the environment in which it grew up. Does it blacken the chastity of the lily to show the foul slime in which it is rooted? It would be a hazardous assumption, but if, for argument's sake, we take it that Jesus is at the near end of a long, long line of progress, and at the far end of that cosmic development, lost in the vast unknown of the prehistoric world, there is nothing but a dim host of ghost-worshippers and totem-idolaters, still, that would not make Jesus any the less wonderful and worshipful. Indeed, that would only make that far-off, shadowy era pathetically attractive, as carrying under the rough garment of its barbarism the promise of that which was one day to be earth's dearest treasure. Suppose that all the modern savants who have invented and exploited the uncouth jargon of "ghosts," "fetishes," "taboos," and "totems" are to be implicitly accepted, the result, in strict logic must be, not to degrade or to cheapen Jesus, but rather to redeem the savage progenitors of our race from all con-

¹ Gwatkin, "Knowledge of God," I, 202.

tempt, and even to make them noble with some fore-gleam of the glory of Him who took up that quest and consummated those tasks which had baffled them. The acorn contains the oak, but it is the oak which explains the acorn. The true character of religion is to be sought not in its earliest but in its last and highest manifestation.¹

(b) Philosophy as the Despairing Criticism of Religion.

Now we come to notice that there is a philosophy, near of kin to the preceding type, which may be called the despairing criticism of religion. Here we meet with a temper which seems not to be uncommon among those who have devoted themselves to the investigation of the physical sciences. To a person accustomed to dealing with things that can be weighed and measured and generalised in a mathematical formula, the treatment of intangibilities like moral and spiritual truths is difficult and irritating. In ethics and in religion we have to handle quantities that no balance can detect and to deal with compounds that no retort can separate. So the materialist, bewildered in a new world, robbed of his pet instruments and denied his darling methods of observation and induction, flings up the investigation of religion in despair, if not in disgust. His attitude tends to become that of the slightly superior person who compliments himself on his ignorance in regard to things which he thinks are not only worthless, like the household rubbish that accumulates in cellars, but also unreal, like the ghosts that terrify yokels. His language tends to have an accent of pity and lofty concession. "Religion may all be true, and again it may not—I do not know, and I am not able to know. Behind the masses which my balances weigh and behind the forces which my instruments record and measure there may be an ultimate something, a ground, an explanation of all things, an Absolute, a Godhead. But this eludes all my finest apparatus. Sometimes I dimly apprehend that it is, but what it is I do not know, and I cannot know.

Perhaps we might take Max Nordau to represent this type of mind. The creature man has an instinct of self-

¹ See Caird, "Fundamental Ideas," I, 28.

preservation, and this led him to shape a god, first on the pattern of his bloodthirsty chief, then on the pattern of his benevolent monarch. Man wanted to know the "why" of things as well as the "how" and the "what." Really he could not help asking the "why," but it was vain to put the question—it can never find an answer. "It would be better to speak of matter as eternal than to speak of God."¹ But from the very dawn of history man has been asking "Why?" as well as "How?" And if we know anything about the future of man from our intimate acquaintance with his past we may declare that he will go on asking "Why?" by an irresistible compulsion, just as the hungry body will go on asking for bread.² Besides, it is too simple to suppose that when we drop the "why" and confine ourselves to the "how," we have bidden farewell to the hopelessly dark things and taken up our abode among the things that are bright with much light. More than half a century ago the Duke of Argyll showed that in many cases the "how" is the baffling, the mysterious thing, and the "why" the thing patent even to untrained enquirers.³ It is quite easy to see why the fish called the Electric Torpedo should be armed with the formidable power of discharging electricity, but how that fish came into the possession of this equipment, while other fish missed it, passes all our powers of investigation and explanation.

The type of thought with which we are now dealing is generally called Agnosticism. Its classical exponent is Mr. Herbert Spencer, and its latest retailer and populariser is the novelist Mr. H. G. Wells. "At the back of all things there is an impenetrable curtain: the ultimate of existence is a Veiled Being, which seems to know nothing of life or death or good or ill. . . . Of that being, whether it is simple or complex or divine, we know nothing: to us it is no more than the limit of understanding, the unknown beyond. It may be of practically limitless intricacy and possibility. The new religion does not pretend that the God of its life is that Being, or that He has any relation of control or association with that Being. It does not even assert that God knows all or more than we do about the ultimate

¹ "The Interpretation of History," 186.

² See Illingworth, "Divine Immanence," 20.

³ "Reign of Law," 103.

being.”¹ Mr. Wells is happy when he is speculating in regions where many will admire and none can contradict him, on the character and the powers of the Martians, or on the possibilities of aviation as a handmaiden of civilisation. He is happier there than when he adventures into the realm of theology. He has built up a pantheon in which he has two gods, one this “Veiled Being,” and the other a god who seems to be only the better side of our common humanity, at any rate, a god whose ignorance of the meaning of things is colossal, a god who staggers and totters in a conflict wherein he may be victor, but wherein he may as likely be beaten. In one word, the Wellsian pantheon has two gods, one unknowable, and the other not worth knowing.

A great many critics have trained their artillery on the agnostic position, and it is not immodest now to claim that if that position has not been rendered untenable, it has been made extremely uncomfortable. One author has condensed a volume of criticism into a sentence—“We may call it the Unknowable, but we cannot believe that it exists unless we think we know something about it. The Unknowable is the Unthinkable.”² And everybody has heard the jocularity of Mr. Bradley, who declared that Mr. Spencer had told us more about the Unknowable than the rashest of the theologians had ventured to tell us about God.

Precisely because we know the ninth symphony of Beethoven, we may assert that a carpenter with a foot-rule cannot measure it. But we can never venture to declare that the human mind cannot know God, till we have exhausted the whole capacity of the human mind and laid bare the whole character of God. We are face to face with the paradox that we cannot say that God is unknowable till we know Him.

But, laying that and other serious difficulties aside, we may perceive that, however plausible the agnostic position may appear to a few minds, the crushing objection for most of us is that it leaves the universe one gigantic cynicism, and that it depresses one great department of man’s need beneath all hope of satisfaction. However eloquently the philosophers of the scientific world may advocate a creed of resigned ignorance, their gospel must always appear

¹ “God, the Invisible King,” 14.

² Gwatkin, “Knowledge of God,” I, 40.

intolerable to the ordinary practical mind. The body craves for food, and the opulent and lavish world sends food, not only sufficiency, but superfluity. The eye cries out for seeing and the ear for hearing, and the genial universe unfolds her beauty to our eyes and rings her jocund gamut in our ears. We live in a regular world, a world which we have come to trust and which never betrays our confidence. Experience has begotten expectation, and our expectation is always justified—the fire that burned us yesterday does not freeze us to-day, and the food that sustained us yesterday does not poison us when our hunger recurs. In such a world then, is it conceivable that the higher nature of man should be tormented by cravings for which there can be no satisfaction, that the soul's crying for the Infinite should be the one yearning which our universe has provoked and encouraged, only to fling it back in mockery? The thirsty heart will not be put off with assurances, however oracular, that its thirst is a mere imagination, a pitiful hypocondria, or, worse still, a childishness which ought to be regretted and outgrown, like the appetite for sweets and the fear of dark rooms. The spirit knows the reality of its pain, and it will keep on believing, maugre all the authority of the gravest science, that somewhere in this world, which has proved so kindly to our other needs, there must be an abiding satisfaction for those yearnings of the spirit which, as they are the earliest, are also the latest and the deepest desires of our nature.

(c) Philosophy as the Ally and Succourer of Religion.

We pass on now to observe that philosophy has again and again been the handmaiden of religion, that criticism has aimed at the establishment and not the overthrow of religion. Philosophy has seen religion harassed by many assailants, and philosophy has come forward proffering the alliances and the weapons wherewith religion might carry triumphant warfare into the territory of her adversaries.

ii. The traditional 'Proofs' of the Being of God.

For one thing, philosophy has constructed various "proofs" of God's existence. Certain ingenious arguments have been elaborated which, setting out from facts to which every one assents, are meant to carry forward and dispose the reason to acquiesce in the facts of revelation.

These arguments have been divided into two classes,

(1) arguments from the world in which man finds himself, and (2) arguments from the build and characteristic of mind itself.¹

(a) From Nature.

We have two lines of proof belonging to the first class, the cosmological argument and the teleological argument. The cosmological argument, in brief, follows back the chain of causes to the First Cause, to a cause which is *causa sui*. Suso put the argument in these words, "O tender God, if Thou are so loving in Thy creatures, how fair and lovely must Thou be in Thyself!"² Mr. Moberley has noticed a more popular form of the same line of reasoning, "If Mary is so beautiful, what must her Maker be?"³ In one of his best-known hymns Tersteegen has given fine expression to this argument. His lines may be rendered, though haltingly and inadequately, in these English words—

The tiny leaves, the blades of grass so small
Acclaim Thy skill. What lives and blooms round me
Lifts up my ravished soul in love to Thee.
How fair, how fair the Maker of it all!⁴

The teleological argument points to the wonderful adaptations to be met with in nature, and reasons backwards to the divine wisdom that designed the universe, and to the divine might which executed the design.

It would be a shallow temerity which called these arguments intellectual scrap. So far as they go, they are good. They dispose the mind to listen to revelation. But they do not go all the way. We cannot overlook the fact that the theory of development has shown how nature's most striking adaptations came into existence, and the old form of the teleological argument has been left in some need of repair.⁵ Further, it is evident that the cosmological and the teleological arguments of themselves can never carry us from the

¹ See Wernle, "Einführung in das Theologische Studium," 357. Hase, "Hutterus Redivivus," para. 54; Flint, "Theism," passim; Bruce, "Apologetics," 159; Orr, "Christian View," chap. III.; Coleridge, "Aids to Reflection," 120, Bohn's Ed.; "Foundations," 442, ff.; Fenelon, "De l'Existence de Dieu."

² Illingworth, "Divine Immanence," 41.

³ "Foundations," 432.

⁴ See "Der Deutsche Psalter," 360.

⁵ Cf. the Duke of Argyll, "Reign of Law," chap. ii., and Gwatkin, "Knowledge of God," I, 60, ff.; Inge, "Faith," chap. xi.; W. R. Thomson, "The Christian Idea of God," 177 ff.

finite to the infinite world. They might give us a wise and a mighty Creator, but they could never give us the spiritual God whom a moral religion demands. The philosophy of a watch brings us just to a watchmaker. Cosmology and teleology bring us only to an Artificer, and an Artificer-God, no matter on what mammoth scale His wisdom and His power are drawn, is something less than our need.

(b) From Mind.

In the second class of proofs, from the build of the mind itself, we have, first of all, the ancient ontological argument. This is the contention that our idea of God is the idea of an absolutely perfect being, and that, as existence is a necessary attribute of a perfect being, God must, necessarily, exist. This, the argument of Anselm, which Hegel thought to be "the alone true one," is apt to appear to most people to be an argument *pour rire*. Kant dismissed the claim that the idea of a thing involves the reality of it by saying that the notion of a hundred dollars in my mind does not prove that I have them in my purse.¹

Leaving all such proofs to the tender mercies of the critics, Kant himself laid all the emphasis on the argument from the moral consciousness. Imperious conscience insists that there must be a God who will redress the injustices of the present economy and crown virtue, as it ought to be crowned, with enduring felicity. "His general conception may be roughly explained by saying that because morality is immortality must be, and because immortality must be God must be."²

Further, there have been those who were influenced by the characteristic dialectic of Hegel, who from the very nature of consciousness deduced the necessary existence of God. The only world that we know is a world constituted by our thought, and if there be a world independent of our thought it must be a world constituted and sustained by the Infinite Thought. Principal Caird, a brilliant scholar of this school, adds, "Nor is this infinite and eternal mind the constituent principle only of outward nature; it is the principle also of finite minds, that on which all thought rests as its pre-supposition and as the element of its activity."³

¹ W. R. Thomson, "The Christian Idea of God," p. 147.

² Paterson, "Rule of Faith," 322.

³ "Fundamental Ideas," I, 151.

III. CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY AND APOLOGETIC.

Now it is very evident that not one of these arguments has any compelling power. The simple fact is that they do not compel. To many they are inadequate—to most they are superfluous.

The critics came up against the Christian faith with all the dead-weight thrust and with all the blind lust for conquest and spoil of a German "drive." They did at once their best and their worst. Again and again some coryphæus of the army of unbelief has intimated, with a pompous gesture, that Christianity was dead. But Christianity has steadfastly refused to die to order, and continues to behave like the liveliest of living things. Then when the assailants of the faith perceived that their weapons were blunted and bent, like ribbons of lead, they drew off front the frontal attack. They began to declare that it was absurd to waste time in attacking a thing whose nature was so vague, whose very existence was open to grave doubt.

Now the amazing thing is that, when we spare a moment from the task of defending the faith and turn round to regard the cohort of the faith's assailants, we find that they are not an army welded into one compact, disciplined force by a common loyalty, but only a rabble of incoherent odds and ends, ready, if the common foe of the Christian faith were happily disposed of, to fall on each another with annihilating fury. "Deists, Pantheists, Agnostics, Pessimists, Atheists, Positivists and liberal theologians unceasingly refute each other; and were their respective opinions put to the vote, out of a dozen systems each would be in a minority of one, with the other eleven against it."¹ Whatever consolation there may be in it, the Christian can comfort himself with the knowledge that there is no one type of anti-Christian doctrine that has been able to beat its rivals from the field and claim the homage of all non-Christian minds.

But if Dr. Orr seems to find a sardonic pleasure in pointing to the internecine strife of the "moderns," no believer need flatter himself that there is a dove-like peace brooding over the world of Christian apologetics. Prof. Bruce² notices that in the statement and the defence of the faith

¹ Orr, "Christian View," 372.

² "Apologetics," 149.

"hardly any argument has been advanced which has not been assailed not merely by unbelievers, but by believers." Leslie Stephen asserts that "there is not a single proof of natural theology of which the negative has not been affirmed as vigorously as the affirmative."¹ Varro in his day, as Augustine tells us,² was astonished to number 288 sects of philosophers on the one question of the true and final beatitude, about which they had "kept a wonderful coil" and brought forth this hundredfold confusion.

But in our own day things have reached a most amazing pass. When there comes an armistice in the long conflict between faith and unbelief, we find the "moderns" keeping themselves fit and preserving their fighting form by belabouring each other. But more than that, in the same intervals of the major conflict, we find the Christian philosophers campaigning against one another. There is a dozen types of Christian philosophy and apologetic, and the leader of every school, no matter how small and vanishing be his following, cries down all the rest, like some academic Codlin denouncing a whole army of Shorts. Each of the protagonists has the whole truth, and each declares that it is sacrilege and absurdity to defend the faith with weapons other than those hammered on his anvil.

(a) The Religion of Feeling.

One famous exponent and defender of the Christian religion, Schleiermacher, made religion a matter of feeling, the feeling of absolute dependance on God.³ But this sort of talk acts on other champions of the faith like a red rag on an angry bull. One of them raps out the impatient observation that "mere feeling is mere absurdity."⁴ Another critic of the religion of feeling declares that it broke down when it referred the Christian consciousness back to Christ.⁵ In so doing it ceased to be subjective and became historical, which is to say that it got bogged once more in all the old sloughs of history and dogma from which at first it seemed to promise a happy delivery. A novelist in a popular work

¹ "An Agnostic's Apology," 13.

² "De Civitate Dei," bk. XIX, chap. 1.

³ See Prof. Otto's Introd. to the "Reden," p. 10.

⁴ Flint, "Theism," 43-35.

⁵ Orr, "Christian View," 23.

might make the broad statement that "religion is something more than notions. It is not notions that set people doing the right things—it's feelings."¹ But the more accurate statement² is that "neither in the Old Testament era nor in the creative epoch of the Christian church was it religious feeling that begat religious ideas, but rather the emotions of religion have sprung from the apprehension and the appropriation of the great dynamical ideas of religion." So, evidently, we are not at liberty to fancy that the old quest ended with the religion and the theology of feeling.³

(b) The Religion of Instinct.

There have been many defenders of the faith who thought that in the intuitions of the heart they had found the unshaken foundation on which religion could be based. A poet like Browning declares that "there is an inmost centre in us all where truth abides in fulness." We have all some small spark of that inward light which is the only guide and authority in religion. The religious genius lives more by looking in upon himself than by looking about him on the world.⁴ Coleridge declares that he submits to the yoke of religion, because its claims to him are self-evident, because religion "finds him."⁵ Another says, "The being of God is as certain to me as my own existence, though when I try to put the grounds of that certainty into shape, I find a difficulty in doing so in mood and figure to my own satisfaction."⁶ All down the ages this intuitive mysticism has had a great fascination and a great following, and only the other day we heard a new voice telling us that "a false religious idea led to the error, namely, that the knowledge of God is given directly to us from without; when by every law of the mind and the soul it must rise from within if it is to have any value whatever."⁷

It is—no doubt—very charming to find God at home, to discover the comfortable knowledge of God rising up with-

¹ Geo. Eliot, "Adam Bede," 163, chap. xvii.

² Paterson, "Rule of Faith," 129.

³ Inge, "Faith," chap. iv.

⁴ Holtzmann, "N. T. Theol.," I, 124.

⁵ "Aids to Reflection."

⁶ Newman, "Apologia," 241.

⁷ Orchard, "Sermons on God, Christ and Man," 15.

in, and not a foreign yoke thrust upon us by some outside violence. But, to say nothing of the fewness of those who do or who can possess God in that way, we know that many Protestant dogmatists and the whole solid phalanx of the Romish church are arrayed against this type of mystic subjectivism. In their view that instinctively given religion would rob the Christian faith of its essentially historic character. It would take away the faith's massive objectivity. It would be likely to introduce an element of individual caprice and a possibility of error and disorder from which the church must be defended.

(c) The Religion of Experience.

"It is a commonplace of modern theology that no doctrine has any value except as it is based on experience."¹ The word 'experience' has always played a great rôle in the record and the apologetic of the Christian life, and we shall see in our concluding chapter that the ultimate vindication of the profoundest article in the Christian creed must lie in the Christian experience. Here we have to notice that the exponents of the experiential type of religion, like Frank among the Erlangen representatives and Herrmann among the Ritschlians, insist that one becomes a Christian only by a miracle of regeneration, that is, by a personal experience.² It follows, therefore, that the attempt to understand Christianity from the standpoint of the natural consciousness is doomed to failure from the very start. The Person of Jesus wakens in us faith in God, and so we become Christians. Apart from such a faith in God no one can understand either Jesus or Christianity.

As we shall see later, there is a grand sense in which there is no other defence of Christianity than the experience of the Christian. But the process of basing religion on experience is certainly not one that has escaped criticism. The whole difficulty seems to be to determine whether the subjective experience of itself can make us acquainted with the whole facts that render the experience possible, or whether experience must in every instance be eked out by a very large contribution provided by revela-

¹ Denney, "Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation," 7.

² Paterson, "Rule of Faith," 138, ff., and Wernle, "Einf. in d. theol. Studium," 283.

tion as the forerunner and the condition of the experience. If we must have a large place in our system for revelation, then it is evident that experience has ceased to play the regulative part in the business of the soul. Even those who are not unfriendly to the argument from experience seem to fear that experience in itself is only a wobbling base on which to rear the fabric of the faith. Moberley, for instance, will not have a personal experience—he demands a social experience as a basis.¹ If so, if we have to collect and collate the experiences of individuals in order to find an abstract thing which is not ‘my experience’ but ‘experience,’ then we feel gloomily that we are back again in the midst of the old troubles. “My experience” at the first promised to be a sort of rope by which I might climb out of the dungeon into sunlight and freedom. Now I am warned that the rope will not lift my weight. I am advised that I must wait till I and others in joint labour have built up the shining stairway of “experience,” by which we shall find our complete enlargement. But, meantime, what materials are to go to the construction of such a means of escape, whether the commonplaces or the extravagances of experience, whether the poetry and the heroics, or the prose and the prudential caution of experience, nobody can tell us, for nobody seems to know.

IV. THE SUPRA-RATIONAL CHARACTER OF RELIGION.

Now we come to the end of our very cursory review of the attempts to demonstrate God and to find a rationale for religion. If now we ask what is the nett outcome of all the long labours of the apologists, the answer seems to be as easy as it is disheartening. The intellect which deals with physical science, with commerce, with manufactures, with husbandry, is mercurial in its swiftness, magical in its resource, and proud even to truculence in its success. But intellect in the presence of the soul’s problem is like a being hypnotised or paralysed. The intellect which would baffle religion is itself baffled. The philosophies which meant to buttress religion are more in need of support than the religion which they set out to fortify. Those succours of distressed religion have reached the very plight of Rome’s

¹ “Foundations,” 459.

pet doctrines. Oral tradition and the papal infallibility were laborious and promising inventions to give assurance to timid believers, but in the come-and-go of distressful days it has been manifested that oral tradition and papal infallibility are harder to bear than the religious system which they meant to convoy and save.¹ The claimant himself is more acceptable than his sponsor.

We can "prove" that the earth is round, and we can "prove" that the angles of a triangle are together equal to two right angles, and in these instances our proof is so despotically clear and conclusive that to resist it is *ipso facto* to be ready for the attentions of the alienists. But nobody can prove, or disprove, God with that finality to which Euclid and the physical sciences have accustomed us. Champions and critics of the faith have waged a conflict like the Battle of Jutland, in which the thunder of the big guns died away only to be succeeded by the more deafening thunder of the debate, "Who won?"

(a) The Assumption of Science.

If faith be "assurance in excess of reason, or independent of it,"² then the ordinary man of science is clearly living by faith. All science has to confess that "it does not begin at the beginning, but from something given, which it does not explain, which in the last resource it cannot explain."³ The scientist has to take the laws of thought for granted. Without such assumptions his labours would have no more value than the guesses at a children's tea-party. But what justification is there for these assumptions on which science proceeds? None in the least. Science knows of standards by which her laboratory instruments are checked, but what does science know, or care, about any standard by which the reason, the ultimate instrument of all intellectual processes, is to be corrected? There is no guarantee that this world is regular. There is no warrant that to-morrow the sun will keep up his age-long habit of rising in the East—there is a very great probability, but no certainty. Yet the scientific investigators as well as the ordinary work-a-day mortals live on in the confidence that the world is regular,

¹ Paterson, "Rule of Faith," 55.

² Balfour, "Found. of Belief," 249; Lecky, "Map of Life," chap. i.

³ J. Arthur Thompson, "Introduction to Science," 137.

that it is a universe and not a multiverse, that our little realm is ordered by an unfaltering will and not by a lord of misrule. What is this, again, but living by faith?

The best science needs again and again to turn its proud regard from the little territory it has subdued, to be sobered and awed by the thought of the vast worlds that it cannot reach, far less subdue. "We dwell amid the Inconceivables; even within the small bright territory of the known our knowledge is—a man of science has confessed it—'the veriest shred.' Forlorn on the plateau stand our tents, and all about them lie the vast umbræ—the past, the future, the meaning of life, the purport of death. What philosophy can explain them?"¹ Half a century has but enhanced the eloquence of the Duke of Argyll when he declared in a memorable passage, "We beat against the bars in vain. . . It is probable that the nearest methods of creation, though far short of ultimate truths, lie behind a veil too thick for us to penetrate. It is here surely, if anywhere, that the man of science may lay down the weapon of his analysis and say, 'I do not exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me.'"² And the paraphrase of both these striking passages is just that the man of science cannot live at all except by faith.

(b) The Presumption of Philosophy.

The philosopher has to begin with self-consciousness. Except self-consciousness, the philosopher is sure of nothing. 'Solipsism' is the weird name of that philosophical creed which refuses to travel beyond the individual's self-consciousness. If one were to meet a solipsist—a pleasure which most people despair of enjoying—one might congratulate that person on being the one reasoner in all the earth who could not be accused of putting more into his conclusion than was already in his premises. If any philosopher speaks of other consciousnesses than his own, or of an outer, independent world, or of history, or God, he has made a leap which no philosophy has ever justified, which, perhaps, no philosophy will ever justify. He is, in a word, living by faith.

¹ Sir Jas. Yoxall, in the "Daily News," 9/1/1918.

² "Reign of Law," 120.

(c) The Postulate of Religion.

We come to this then, that in every walk in life we have to live by faith, to take risks in order to get on. It has been pointed out that the physiologist does not wait in suspense, as perhaps he ought to do, till the chemist has rounded off his subsidiary science, nor does the psychologist wait till the physiologist and the chemist have completed the foundations on which he ought to build.¹ The physician has to take risks—pain and disease will not wait till chemistry and biology and physiology have put into the physician's hands systems in which there is neither gap nor guess. Without assumptions life would be paralysed. Science begins with a world whose matter and forces are bound fast under unvarying laws. Philosophy begins with the risky presumption of a world of self-conscious creatures. And religion begins with its own legitimate and necessary presuppositions, with God and the soul of man. This is practically the whole of the old controversy *in nuce*. Religion grasps God and then goes on with her high and solemn business. Theodore Parker well said that belief in God rests on Reason, but it certainly does not rest on reasoning.² If religion has little to hope for from the philosophers who offered her their alliance, she has little to fear from the hostile critics who came brandishing their wooden swords against her and offering her the alternatives of surrender or extermination. Of course, this does not mean to say that religion is an irrational thing, or a non-rational thing, unless, that is, any one is prepared to say that science and philosophy are irrational or non-rational, for we have seen that in this respect science and philosophy and religion are all in the same case. It is not permitted us to suppose that the bare intellect could have forced its way through a maze of difficulties to the sublime conception of a spiritual God, as the unaided intellect has stormed its way forward to the secrets of the larger mathematics of the skies. But religion, starting with the conception of God as spiritual and self-revealing, can and does justify herself at the bar of reason.

Religion is, to most men, more of a practice than a specu-

¹ See Moore, "Origin and Nature of Life," 12.

² "Discourse," 8.

lation. Religion means both action and contemplation, but the contemplatives are the handful in the lone cell, and the actives are the multitudes in the humming streets and markets. We have already noticed the fact that not one of the great heroes of religion ever found fame as a thinker. Life is very short, and the academic debate about God and religion and morality has been raging now for centuries, for millenniums even, and it does not appear a whit nearer a settlement than the day it began. But the moral and the spiritual decision will brook no off-put—even to postpone one's decision in these matters is in itself an ominous decision. Life is not only short, but urgent. We must decide now. We must choose eagerly, immediately and irrevocably. We must stake everything on "the hypothesis that the nature of things is good, and on the side of goodness."¹ We must decide with the consciousness that we shall not visit again the pale glimpses of the moon to rectify our errors and reach in a second life-experiment the success that we missed the first time of trial. The whole long history of thought, the long fluctuating, still undecided conflict between the idealists and the materialists, all proves that the intellect is quite unable to dispose of this business. The dry intellect is in a perpetual state of see-saw, unable to rest either on the side of belief or of denial. Jeremy Taylor said that heresy is not an error of the understanding, but of the will, and Coleridge added that faith is not an accuracy of logic but a rectitude of heart. The heart, not the head, must end the tedious business of proving and disproving. The will, not the understanding, is the umpire in this high contest. "The existence of God cannot be logically demonstrated. There are many proofs, but no demonstration, and those who insist on one must be told that we have none to give."² If faith be the summary name for "something which is not already verified by experience or demonstrated by logical conclusion,"³ then we may feel ourselves at liberty to declare that Tom Paine lived by faith as much as father Abraham. If we accept God we embrace Him with arms of faith. If we refuse God it is still true that the arms with which we spurn Him are arms

¹ Inge, "Faith and its Psychology," 2.

² Gwatkin, "The Knowledge of God," I, 9.

³ Inge, "Faith and its Psychology," chap. I.

of faith. Belief in God is a thing without demonstration, and atheism is a thing without proof. The heart of a man must settle which is the nobler risk.

(d) Illustration of Religious Decision from the parallel case of Politics.

This result at which we are arrived is apt to be disappointing. Those who want a religion that can defy all comers and refute all gainsayers are bound to feel surprised and suspicious. They will frankly express their dislike of the position. They will be ready with the objection, or, rather, the taunt that this way is the same as making religion a sort of cuttle fish which exudes an inky confusion in order to facilitate its own escape. But if such a suspicion seems to lie against religion, a moment's reflection will show that religion is not alone in such a condemnation.

How does a man reach his political convictions? No man is a Conservative or a Liberal or a Socialist by any process of cold logic. Nobody dares to differ from Euclid. Nobody ever heard of rival sects of mathematicians. Hobbes, in his "Leviathan," asks, "Who is so stupid as both to mistake in geometry and also to persist in it when another detects his error to him?" If the intellect were the sole arbiter in politics, as it is in mathematics, if political science rested on the accumulation of undoubted facts and the necessary deductions from these facts, there could be only one type of political faith in the world, a political catholicism from which no dissent would be possible. The abject futility of a debate, say, between a Free Trader and a Tariff Reformer, is all the evidence one needs to learn that political opinion is not the result of logical demonstration. If reason were competent to settle a man's political creed, then nothing could prevent the absolute sway of reason in this realm. But the determination of political opinion is *ultra vires* for reason; and hereditary bias, class prejudice, personal sympathies and antipathies, respect for the order that now is, dreams of a better order that might be and that ought to be—a hundred motives, drawn from a realm that lies deeper than reason, precipitate and fix our political beliefs and aspirations. There is neither canonisation nor cursing for Euclid. Nobody demonstrates for 'Barbara, Celarent,' and the other logical formulæ. No-

body denounces or exults over a scientific generalisation like the law of gravitation. But politics are strenuous and passionate, and it is just the ultra-rational character of politics that lends all its vehemence to the political life and all its heat to the challenge and defence of political opinions.

Clearly, then, in two respects religious opinion is unlike mathematical knowledge, and like the creed of the politician. In the first place it is a business of passion—it kindles in a man life's superlative enthusiasm. Euclid has no fanatics, simply because Euclid is the child of the cold reason. But religion, because it is begotten, like a political creed, of motives which lie deeper than the reason, has friends who are passionately friendly and opponents who are passionately unfriendly. Secondly, religion is never the conclusion of any syllogism.

This is hardly the place to discuss fully what are the motives that make a man religious. Perhaps mere fashion, the plastic influence of a religious environment, the tradition and usage of a circle. Perhaps heredity, the bias or prejudice of the father handed down to the son—only, in this case, we have to observe that there is often a case of inverted heredity, the liking of the father become the loathing of the son. Perhaps humiliation and bafflement in all attempts to read the riddle of existence. Perhaps a poignant disappointment with all the slight reward that painful questing has gathered. Perhaps—and this is surely not uncommon—a great self-disgust, a revulsion, an overwhelming persuasion that man was not made for the service of the seen and the sordid, a high resolve to trust God for the redemption of the wasted years and the re-adornment of a tarnished character. But whatever it is that gives a man his religious convictions with all their intensity and clearness, it is never anything like that tyrannical logic which rules in the "Principia," and rules in such a way as makes revolt unthinkable. A man may be irreligious because there is a certain moral laxity in his character, or because he has conceived some prejudice against professing religionists, or because he thinks that organised religion is the champion of certain social institutions that he loathes and wants to see abolished. There may be a hundred other reasons possible for a man's irreligion, but among them all Reason itself never figures.

Nobody must fancy that this result, which we have

travelled a long way to reach, is a poor guerdon for all our toil. In strict truth it is a very great result. It means that we can settle life's grand interests without the fear or the favour of the intellect. Surely it is not a small thing to know that we can determine the question of religion on religious grounds, that we can stake all on God without the uncomfortable suspicion that we are offending against some final court of appeal and review. Our hearts have sovereign rights in this matter, and they can decide without dread of interference or review by any other judicatory. With the logic of the soul, therefore, we determine to pass by the arena of millennial debate, and we march right forward to the exultant conclusion that faith with all its energy and its optimism is better than unbelief with all its pessimism and its paralysis. Better the belief that thrills than the denial that kills! Better the confidence that electrifies than the despair that electrocutes! Faith is the highest and the best thing in the world. It brings purity and peace to the heart, it lifts up the aspirations to all magnanimous ideals, it gives life a carolling quality and it beautifies all the outward of man's days as with the shining presences of angels. No cost is too high for the prize of reaching God. A man might endure the weariness of the longest road, a man might climb with bleeding fingers the sheer cliff or plunge through barriers of fire, if only he could come at God, the home and the honour of a man's soul. Nothing fits the gravity of these things but the passion-cry, "I *will* know Thee, O Thou Unknown, who seizest my inmost soul, who sweepest through my life like a storm, Thou Incomprehensible, my Kinsman, I will know Thee, will serve Thee."¹

The 'Student in Arms' called religion "betting your life on God." It is only when a man has made the venture and staked his everything on God that the confirmations and the encouragements come pouring in on him from all sides. "God is His own Interpreter." We have to trust Him before we know that He is worth our trust. Theodore Parker said that our belief in God always precedes the proof of His existence.² Another American, a humorist, who in the guise of a comic Irishman made profound obser-

¹ Nietzsche, qu in "Der deutsche Psalter," 428.

² "Discourse," 8.

vations on men and movements, declared that "you must start in believing before you can find a reason for your belief. A firm belief attracts facts. They come out of the holes in the ground and the cracks in the wall to support faith, but they run away from doubt."

If anybody is tired of the din of debate, if a man wants "to come to business," if a man finds it barren work higgling with the disputants about terms, if a man will go straight to the Eternal and fling himself on the God whom his heart knows, the first expression of that high resolve will be in prayer. Jesus of Nazareth, who knew God and served God perfectly, learned of God, and strengthened Himself for the perfect service of God, in prayer. They who would learn of God and serve God must fall down beside Jesus and learn from Him how to pray.

CHAPTER II.

THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD.

Matt. vi., 9; Our Father which art in heaven.

I. THE THEOLOGY OF JESUS.

(a) Summed up in the word "Father."

The character of any type of piety is to be discovered in its conception of God. Any description, therefore, of the religion of Jesus, whether popular or scientific, must make a beginning with His doctrine of God. The faith in which Jesus lived and died is condensed into one word. In the word "Father" He described the essential nature of God, and on the same word He based and outlined the whole of the final religion of man. This was His unique and favourite way of presenting God and the holy life. "But the ages overtake Him slowly." In spite of the fact that the doctrine of Jesus has been before the world now for two milleniums, tested and attested, we have to repeat the surprised question of a great student of the gospels, "Has not Christendom been slow to learn the revelation of the Father?"¹ We remember that theology, not only in the early scenes and stages of the Christian era, but also in our own land and in comparatively recent times, laboured to describe God's relationship to men in terms of criminal law. Old Bailey was a better academy for divinity than the fireside. Men were in no sense sons protected and disciplined by a wise Father. They were only criminals in the dock, and God was grim justice on the bench. Probably, so long, at least, as the New Testament has any authority, that old theology will not be set aside by the airy persiflage which some have employed. But it was a tremendous loss when men forgot so completely that Jesus dwelt long and lovingly on God's fatherhood and our sonship. The world begins to be home-sick, to weary to see

¹ Bruce, "Kingdom of God," 147.

the Father's face. From the sobered heart of Christendom there rise the words of a wise resolution to go home, to our Father.

(b) Christ's lifelong Use of "Father" as name for God.

We shall get nearer our subject now, if we remember that the life of Jesus, as represented in the gospels, began and ended with the thought and the practice of the fatherhood of God. In the sunshine hours of His life, when the skies above were blue and the pathways gay with the laughter of flowers, when the world of men smiled on Him and acclaimed Him as a Teacher sent from God, He looked up with a glad heart and said, "I thank Thee, Father." (Matt. xi., 25). We can trace the word further back than that even in the biography of the Master. We remember Him in His earliest years seated among the Temple doctors. We remember that His word of reply to the pained protest of His parents was, "Wist ye not that I must be in my Father's house?" He nursed and nerved His early manhood on that word, and its strength carried Him through the last ordeal. When He hung on the cross, in all the long-drawn night of His last agony, He was still leaning, as sure as ever, on the grand word that had sustained the confidence of His life's morning. "Father, he cried, "forgive them." (Luke xxiii., 34). And again, "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit." (Luke xxiii., 46). When He had spoken the beloved word for the last time, the tremour of death shook His frame; He bowed His head; the Saviour of the world was dead, dead with the fragrance of "Father" on His lips.

So at a glance we see that the word "Father" covers and interprets the whole of the life of Christ.

II. THE PRECEDENCE OF GOD.

We have already seen that science has to begin with matter and force, that philosophy has to begin with a world of self-conscious beings, and that religion has to begin with the soul and God. Now we must claim a little time to see how the very first phrase in the Lord's Prayer teaches the primacy and the supremacy of God. Boys at school in elementary mathematical classes are taught that the first step to the solution of certain problems is to arrange the

terms in the proper order. Without this proper arrangement the schoolboy's task is hopeless. We are all scholars working on a larger problem in a larger school, and we have to learn that with us too the problem is hopeless till we have arranged the terms of it in their proper order. The Bible places God first, first in time, first in goodness, wisdom, glory and power, and it is driven home upon us by solemn statement and reiteration that God must be first in all our thought and in all our action. The Bible has its Genesis document, and that book of beginnings opens statelily, not with a science, but with a theology, not with traditions of heroes, or legends of angels, or myths of divinities, but with the name and the act of God. The decalogue, the epitome of the divine legislation, begins, not with our obligations to men, but with our debt toward God. The Lord's Prayer begins, not with man's needs, or his sins, not with the inventory of the one or the problem of the other, but with a solemn address to God, with a tender and a profound characterisation of the Being into whose presence we are ushered in prayer. So, therefore, in all our learning we must strive to know God first, before we have catalogued the wonders of the nature that lies about us, and before we have tabulated the majesties and the mysteries of the nature within us. In our conduct we have to learn to act out of regard to God, first, before ever we appease the hunger of our own body or answer the cry of our brother's need.

To those who have been nurtured on the Bible's teaching it must seem quite unnecessary to say that God must be ever first, just as much of a platitude as to say that an admiral ought to know about navigation. But such immeasurable calamities and distresses have arisen from the foolishness of putting secondary things in the place of primary things that we must again and again go back upon those facts which are so profound because they are so commonplace, to the basic, necessary truths which, by a terrible irony of injustice, are treated with contempt just because they are so universally recognised. We must again and again emphasise God's primacy, the eternal fact which the very first word in the Lord's Prayer lifts up into such dazzling prominence. Begin with God in the first place, and life runs out musically and smoothly to its happy close. Begin by degrading God to the second place, or

begin, as so many do, by dropping Him out of the problem altogether, and then the business of existence turns out to be a crazy adventure, which runs through perplexity and bafflement to end at last in panic and disaster.

(4) Myself.

In the economy of life there are three elements whose relations we have to settle, three terms, that is, whose proper order we must know before we can hopefully attack that problem which no one of us may avoid. There is the aggressive, clamorous thing called Ego, I—an understanding that finds itself at home in a world which seems as if made for it, as it seems to have been made for this comfortable, friendly world; a body which has to be fed and for whose support the world's storehouses are crammed full; a complex of passions and appetites which demand with dictatorial vehemence the postponement of all else to their immediate gratification. Now the first mastery that a man must achieve is the mastery over himself, over his words, his thoughts, his desires. For the sake of wider and worthier things a man must be ready to reduce insurgent members by the most drastic discipline, to cut off an offending hand, to tear out an offending eye. (Matt. v., 29-38).

If a man loses the sense of values and proportion, if he must have the ease, the pleasure, the satisfaction of vociferous appetites, we call him "selfish." There are men whose only worship is a sort of oblique compliment offered to themselves—they have made themselves their god. This class is everywhere represented, and everywhere, by those who are competent to judge, it is contemned for the folly which it cherishes, and feared for the mischief which it does. Not only has the eloquence of religion warned men off from this grossness, but a hundred less august monitors have laboured tirelessly to turn men away from self-indulgence. Art has lifted men up out of the baseness to a realm of nobler joys and worthier quests. Literature has charmed men, or shamed men, out of the narrow and sordid life, displayed a wider world for men to dwell in and ushered them into the joy and the dignity of it. Patriotism has entered her appeal against all ignoble safety and all cowardly self-consideration, has taught men by a resistless

logic that there is something higher than one's own pleasant existence, something for which a man must hunger, suffer shame, and even die. Family affection has pleaded, constantly and, mostly, with easy success, against the pampering of self—the very name of father or mother, of brother or sister, has taught many a man to refuse all gratification so that another might either be happy or reach a higher happiness. Selfishness stands condemned in the name of religion, and of every great cause and every honourable interest that this earth knows. Unless we are quite blinded and desperate, we dare not put self first. If any insensate mortal is crying, "Before everything else, I must be considered, I must eat and drink and be made merry," we know, on a good authority, that that man is not very distant from the final disappointment and loss, the loss even of those very things for which the fool always hazards all that is worth losing. (Luke xii., 16-21).

2. (A) My Neighbour.

The next element that demands a place in the statement of life's elements is the world of men and women with whom I have to live. I do know the word "duty," even though I do not know how I learned it. I feel constantly and strongly that my "duty" to the world of men and women around me compels me to deny myself. I may not steal a loaf to appease my own hunger if the risk is that I may make another's pangs the sharper. I feel within me the drive of imperious lusts, and duty sternly orders me to resist and subdue these urging desires, for the gratification of my appetite is certain to entail pain and shame upon the victim of my passion. Conscience, the interpreter and voice of duty, again and again orders me to suffer so that some other may not suffer, but conscience—except in a lunatic world—never bids me inflict suffering on another in order that I myself may escape suffering.

We do not need to debate ~~just now~~ whether the sense of duty is something elemental in our nature, a something built into the very fibre of our being from the beginning, like the power of a nerve to respond to stimulation, or whether it is an acquisition, like the ability to read a printed page, an accomplishment laboriously worked up during the long progress of our race. But, whatever may

have been its origin, we do know that the autocrat within us, whose behest brooks no criticism, far less disobedience, commands us to suffer and endure in order that others may escape burden and weariness. The profoundest labours of philosophy have been given to the defence of duty. The poets, with thrilling music and in haunting phrase, have sung of the awfulness and the majesty of duty. Our whole civilisation is the product and the monument of the moral powers. One can say that not only has the fabric of our world been built up by moral authority, but by moral authority alone it is conserved. Take away the sense of duty from man, and he has ceased to be man—he has fallen to an inferior place among the beasts.

3 4 God.

But there is another point that we have now to deal with. We have to find a place for God. There have been some very earnest moral teachers who could employ every engine of learning and eloquence to show how unworthy is self-regard, whose haunting words and massive arguments could woo, or compel, men from the service of self, who could write gleaming, coloured, unforgettable sentences about the nobility of self-sacrifice, and who yet denied the existence of God and the immortality of man. George Eliot was one of the greatest of such teachers. She spoke of the three words which have been the race's trumpet-calls, of 'God,' of 'immortality' and 'duty,' and "with terrible earnestness she pronounced how inconceivable was the first, how unbelievable was the second, and yet how peremptory and absolute was the third."¹

Philosophers, as well as romancists, have spoken about morality for morality's sake. There is no such thing. As a matter of fact no man can do anything except with a regard to consequences. It is evident, too, that without God the worthiest conception of duty languishes and dies. If one reads the life of George Eliot, one has sufficient evidence that this is not so very hazardous a saying. Here was one passionately in love with duty, one who cashiered God and dismissed immortality, one who dedicated all her brilliant powers to the worship of duty and exhausted her

¹ R. H. Hutton, "Modern Guides of English Thought," 261.

strength in persuading others to serve at the same altar of duty. She went her own way, and her life reads like one of the saddest and emptiest tales that this earth has had to hear.

But to come back again to the question of morality without religion, this is a matter that can be settled out of hand by the canons of common sense. Goldwin Smith declared that "the denial of the existence of God and a future state is the dethronement of conscience."¹ If there be no God and no immortality, how can one hope to persuade men to be moral? How can one hope to persuade men to remain moral, if once they have abjured belief in God? Tigers can be kept from blood only by certain obvious restraints. The wild nature in man—often a very different thing from the human nature which is canvassed in the philosophical text-books—can be restrained from evil and constrained to good only by the dread sanctions, only by an operative faith in God and the life to come. "Morality without religion is insufficient for general civilisation."² Surely it is not a libel on our kind to say that human nature needs both a bridle and a spur. Surely it is easy to add that all the efficient restraints and impulses have come from religion. It is a commonplace among the students of our history that in the infancy of our race society progressed and order was founded because "customs were established as religious and enforced by sanctions too dread to be despised."³

Religion gone, what could there be to induce any man to seek arduous goodness? What could hinder lust from driving life to all extremes of sensuality and shame? How would sensuality even know itself as shameful? Duty for duty's sake is a very heroic sort of appeal, but in the unheroic world of our acquaintance it is a rather impotent sort of challenge. If there be no God, how can it appear anything but delirium or, worse still, bad business, for a nation or an individual to practise denial? If there be no God, where must we arrive but at the ghastly gospel of the superman and the strong fist? If the last breath ends all, my one business here must be to draw out my span of life

¹ qd by McAdam Muir, "Modern Substitutes," 226.

² Frederick Harrison, "Philosophy of Common Sense," 161.

³ A. M. Fairbairn, "Philosophy of the Christian Religion," 192.

to the furthest and to supersaturate my days with the highest mundane delights. If by any guile or violence I can do it with impunity, I must steal, to enlarge and enrich my own meal. I must kill, so as to diminish the number of my competitors for the world's dainties. If there be no future life, then my prize must be all here, and I must thrust and smite with Berserker fury so that I may secure a lion's share for myself. To the man who does not believe in God it is a stage beyond madness to suggest that he should do anything for the sake of future ages or for the advance of civilisation. Why should he be dainty or squeamish in a world that has no morrow of reckoning and no Justice to hold the balances true? Why should he trouble about the weal of others when the enlargement of others so evidently means life for him in reduced circumstances? Why should he be pinched and penalised by any sentimental regard for the happiness of ages which he shall never see, whose happiness he shall never share?

We have with us some very interesting utopian systems, mostly socialistic, which seem to aim at the ennoblement of the earth by the device of banishing the Christian superstition from the world. These genial dreams forecast an era when men, grown chivalrous by the mere lapse of time, will give the sweat of their brows and the anguish of their spirits, not for the sordid considerations of profit or power, but solely from the lovely motive of benevolence. God, it is maintained, has been the patron of privilege and oppression, and if only His domination could be broken, the inherent greatness of human nature would be displayed in all its radiance, men would love their neighbours more than themselves, no worker would ask for any other reward than the consciousness of having done good, and sorrow and wrong would be as forgotten as the culture of the troglodytes.

An attractive prospect, perhaps! But, unfortunately for the realisation of it, it rests on three errors, on a mistaking of human nature, on a misunderstanding of the teaching of history, and on a misrepresentation of the character of God.

It is no slander to say that men will not exert themselves except for the hope of some reward or the fear of some penalty. No person does anything just for the sake of doing it. No man exercises his mind or wags his little finger unless he looks at something beyond his thought and his

act. If God and His sanctions are gone, and if the only inducements to exertion be, on the one hand, a man's own enrichment in pleasing sensations and his aggrandisement in consequence and estate, or, on the other hand, the encomium of a tame society, a single glance into one's own heart will declare which of these two sets of motives is the more likely to prevail. Human nature is such that if men are not incited to action by the lure of tangible prizes, or by the hope of the divine approval and reward, then the least calamity we may predict or hope for is simply that men will do nothing at all, and that this busy, sanitary, progressive civilisation of ours may fall back into nothing worse than the dirty, ignorant stagnation of the moujik life in Russia.

Again, if history shows anything at all, it shows with wearisome monotony that without the dread sanction of religion morality becomes a mockery. In the decay of the fear of God morals corrupt, and then private security and national greatness totter and fall.

Again, it is too obvious a libel to say that God is the patron of privilege and oppression. "The righteous God loveth righteousness."¹ He who demands as the first element of our faith love toward Himself demands as the second element love toward our neighbour. (Deut. vi., 5).

If there has been an increase of sweetness and light in the world that has not been due to the blind mechanic evolution of human nature, but to the better knowledge and the more steadfast doing of the will of God. If there be nominal Christians, of a vampire type, who live on the penury and the simplicity of others, then it would surely be a topsy-turvy way of dealing with them for their betterment to make them *less* Christian, pretty much like putting out a man's eyes to cure him of a squint. The evident cure for that morbidity is to make them more Christian. The vampire lives *for* self *on* others—the Christian lives *in* Christ *for* others.

"Although philosophy has reflected much and deeply upon the moral dynamic, it has no effective guidance to give as to the way in which the power is generated that ensures to man the victory over evil and enables him to attain the chief end of his moral being. The truth is that

¹ Psalm 11, 7. cf. Psalm 48, 10.

the twofold argument of the patristic apologetic still holds—that our intellectual blindness and above all our moral weakness make a pathetic appeal for the direct help of God.”¹ It is true that if there were no God and no doctrine of immortality we would need to invent both of them in the interest of morality. Nobody but the decadents wants to place self first—and even among the degenerates it is only those whose decadence has become pathological in asylums and convict in prisons who maintain selfishness as a definite creed. The best and the noblest of our race have served duty, and have laboured with unflagging zeal to win the world for the same devotion and service. If there is still to be a morality in this world, the only way in which we can give it *élan* and success is by knowing God truly and loving Him wholly.

God, my neighbour, myself—these are the elements of our problem. God, my neighbour, myself—this is the order in which the terms of our problem have to be stated. The whole magnificent arrangement of Jeremy Taylor’s “Holy Living” shows that life has only three duties: sobriety, my duty to myself; righteousness, my duty to others; religion; my duty to God. And the greatest of these is religion.

III. THE DIVINE FATHERHOOD.

It has now become clear what we must do next. Not only must we put God in His right place, that is, the first place, but it is necessary that we should put the *right* God in the first place. Religion will be of little use to any man if he offers his homage to some godlet of his own feigning, or if he carries his offering to the altar of some god of an arrested development, some tribal deity as pathetically useless as the Baal who slept while his votaries cried upon him and ran blood to give a red emphasis to their cries. “It is better,” says Dr. Horton, “to believe that God is not than to believe that He is and not the best.”²

It is important to pay attention to this point. “God” in itself is a mere empty word, so far as its orthography goes not a bit better and not a bit worse than any other word

¹ Paterson, “Rule of Faith,” 106.

² “Regeneration,” 20. cf. Jer. Taylor, “Holy Living,” Chap. IV., sect. i., par. 2.

of three letters. It is the content that we bring to it or find in it that makes all the glory of the word. We may fill out the word with the costly facts of the gospel. We may load it with subtleties of metaphysical speculation. We may pour into it unsavoury matter from the puddles of superstition and falsehood. What would be the use of putting a God in the forefront of our lives whom we could assail with taunts and even with blows, like Imraulcais when his idol refused to gratify his desires?¹ What would it avail one now, in this noontide of the world's growth, to have a God like the patriarch's, with whom one could drive a huckster's bargain? (Gen. xxviii., 16-22).

(a) God as Holy Love.

1. When Jesus called God "Father" He revealed the Eternal as Holy Love. God is Love, and they that trust in Him are delivered from all worry. God is the Supreme Goodness who knows our want and the want of the whole world, who provides always for us according to His own perfect understanding of our need. (Matt. vi. ; 8, 32). There can be no worry where there is trust in the Father. "If you worry you do not trust, and if you trust you do not worry"—this is the wisdom that is so portable and so helpful that it is printed on gilt cards and framed and displayed on thousands of cottage-walls; and by that same token it is a better wisdom than that which adds obese volumes to the deadweight on the library's shelves and serves no good purpose in the world but to give work to the charwoman and her duster. "Take no thought . . . your heavenly Father knoweth," this is the royal specific for a happy life.) (Matt. vi. 31-32.)

Jesus even spoke a parable to laugh men out of their fears. It is the happy suggestion of Weinell² that the parable of the Unjust Judge was a merry, bantering tale told by the Master to show to all time the absurdity of anxiety. The scoundrel of a Judge heard a plaintiff—and God the Father will neither hear nor give help! The thing is preposterous. Jesus helped the fearful to laugh at their fears, and, with that wholesome laughter, they were

¹ Robertson Smith, "Rel. of the Sem.," p. 47, fn.

² Biblische Theol. d. N.T., 170.

back again in the old sunny world of trust. If an earthly father—to reason from some more respectable analogy—hears and answers his child's cry, why should we doubt that God will hear and provide for His own? (Matt. vii., 8-11.). If no prolonged career of profligacy can alienate a father's love, if no prodigality on a son's part can ever make his son's place forfeit, we may be very sure that no sustained course of folly and transgression can ever wear out the patience of God, or rob the wretched son, as he turns homeward from his folly, of his Father's blithe and effusive welcome.

God's goodness has travelled worlds beyond the stage of retributive justice, as is shown in the parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard (Matt. xx., 1-16.). His attitude to those who have wronged Him is not vindictive, but always one of utter forgiveness. With God, "sin is not a thing to be punished, but to be forgiven."¹ If there be traces in the words of Jesus of another God, a God whose sovereignty is absolute and whose right is His mere good pleasure, a God who is to be feared because He has the power to kill and to cast into hell, (Lk. xii., 4-5.), still this Sovereign-God is not the contradiction or the limitation of the Father-God. We shall have occasion later on to see that the true kingdom is fatherhood. Love and authority—as Weinel has pointed out—are not mutually exclusive things in God any more than trust and awe are mutually exclusive things in God's children. It is all one whether we call Him the Infinite Love or the Supreme Sovereign, either way He has a lien upon all our being. As He is Majesty, He claims our allegiance. As He is Love, He claims our affection.

But we have an attributive to notice as well as a substantive. If we remember that God is love, we must not forget that He is *Holy* love. If it is a love "individual, careful, minute, bountiful, patient, forgiving, unquenchable" that Jesus ascribes to God, we have to remember that it is also "pure and holy."² In old Greece morality and religion were at variance, and morality killed religion. In the days of the Old Testament prophets and at the time of the Reformation, morality purged religion.³ But where men

¹ Horton, "Reconstruction," 37.

² Candlish, "Christian Doctrine of God," 69.

³ See "Lux Mundi," 50-51, and Fairbairn, "Philosophy of the Christian Religion," 238.

worship a God who is holy love, morality and religion can never be at variance. In the doctrine of Christ we have the synthesis of the highest morality and the purest religion. Matthew Henry has set this down in a golden word. As God is the Father in Heaven we must know that "heaven is a place of perfect purity, and we must therefore lift up pure hands, must study to sanctify His name who is the holy One and dwells in that holy place."

(b) The Almighty Father.

Because God is the Father in Heaven, He is necessarily the Almighty as well as the All-loving. Our human love is a mocked, embittered thing, because with us love's desire is ever thwarted by love's impotence. A mother has the puniest of hands to thrust away the menace from her offspring. If it were possible, she would draw the death-bolt to her own bosom in order to save her child, but not even by the sacrifice of herself can she prolong her darling's span by a hairsbreadth. A father might be ready to tear out his own heart if that would secure his son's repute, but with all that willingness to suffer and all that yearning to save, the father has to stand aside helpless and see his beloved sucked down the greedy throat of that whirlpool of iniquity where so many of earth's sons are lost for ever. This is love's tragedy. Love is so brave, so anxious to shield the dear ones from hurt and to save them from shame, yet so powerless to do either. But God's is no baffled love. It is the love of the Almighty who performs as He plans, who wills and does the best. If God cares for the lilies, if He overlooks the fall not even of a single sparrow, how can He be feeble or faithless toward His dearest? (Matt. vi., 28 : 10, 29.).

Because the Father is the Almighty Love, Christ's life was free from that attrition of anxieties which eats away our joy of life before life is half over. He knew that no force of circumstances and no ingenuity of malice could ever thwart the Father's purposes. The wondrous peace that lay upon all His life, like the freshness of morning sunshine, was nothing but the outward badge of His heart's trust in the Father. He *knew* God, and His knowledge brought Him rest. So, by a supreme fitness it was He who

issued the gracious invitation, "Come unto me and I will give you rest." (Matt. xi., 28.).

(c) The All-wise Father.

To Jesus, God the Father was not only loving and strong. He was also wise. Jesus bowed His head, therefore, and learned to say, "Even so, Father, for it seemed good in Thy sight." (Matt. xi., 26.). One might have been tempted to dream that calling God Father was to claim indulgence and preferential treatment, the fondling and pampering which a doting mother lavishes on a spoiled child. With Jesus all that kind of thing was inconceivable. The Father of our Lord is the Father in Heaven. He does not suffer from the myopia and the folly that distress earthly parentage. He is the highest wisdom, as He is the deepest love, and all God's children who have learned of the Father in the school of Jesus walk down to the bitterest experiences with a firm step and an unbroken courage. "Not my will, but thine"—that was the temper in which He faced His ordeal. Even the cup that He had to drink came from His Father, and in the word "Father" there was an alchemy to change its bitterness and make it welcome.

Men behold the beauty and the strength of the life of Christ, and they regard it in the same way as the performance of any supreme artist. The achievement is charming, provocative of applause. But the practice of it! We lift our hands and raise our eyebrows in token of our unwillingness to attempt the feat of Jesus, to show our amazement that anyone ever thought us capable or desirous of that emulation. We declare that the endowment, the training, the opportunity for such spiritual heroism is not ours, and then we fancy that our apologia stands unassailable.

All these pleas, which appear so plausible, so modest in the pleader, and so respectful to the Master, are nothing but a disloyalty toward Him. What they amount to is just the effrontery of saying that Jesus is only another speculating empiric, and that He miscalculated when He proclaimed the capacity of every man for the divine sonship. But if, leaving all pleas of apathy and timidity, we take Christ's way of it, we shall certainly know the truth of His vision and the joy of His salvation. The surprise of the Father's love and the greatness of our own destiny in the

sonship of God and the brotherhood of Christ will quicken in us a responsive love and a noble manhood. The realisation of God's love will carry us to the new life far more surely than all mercenary and terrorised motives. We shall walk onward through life, like the sons of God, with that glad and heroic carelessness which is founded on the infinite and vicarious carefulness of our Father in heaven.

(d) The Spirituality of God.

God, then, is our Father *in heaven*. We have been gathering up here and there a few hints, but we have now to ask directly what is the significance of the phrase "which art in heaven." There was a foreshadowing of it in one of Israel's finest lyrics, "The sacrifices of God are a broken and a contrite heart." (Ps. li., 17.). The full truth of it was proclaimed in the words uttered at the well of Sychar, "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in Truth." The fact is that God does not want those who are breathless with crying out, "Lord, Lord." (Matt. vii., 2.). He wants those whose breath and strength are dedicated to the doing of the divine will. The Father in heaven must not be put off with anything carnal or external, anything that has only the quality and the commendation of this transient earth. Men must not think that they can worship or serve the Father in heaven if they have nothing to give Him but materialities, fine vestments, fine sonorities of organ and vocal music, fine oratory, fine gesture and deportment. God is a Spirit, God is the Father *in heaven*, and the only fine thing in His eyes is the good heart, the heart filled with a pure love to God and a steady charity to man. All else is like the chaff which the wind driveth away.

IV. THE RELATION OF THE FATHER TO MEN.

If man were not corrupt he would not need a salvation. If he were utterly corrupt, he would be beyond saving. If man had been altogether spiritual he would have been numbered among the unfallen angels. If he were altogether carnal he could never rise, never even wish to rise. The glory and the distress of man's condition lie just in the fact that there is in him such a strange interplay of the angel and the devil, the spiritual in him trying to transform

the material, and the material agonising to debauch and engross the spiritual. Jesus saw the wreck of human character, and His words were at times stern and sad. (Matt. xv., 18; Mk. vii., 21.). But He saw opening up the radiant world, which was stretching out beckoning hands to all the sons of men, to which man was born, in which man was welcome. So Jesus was the world's great optimist. The bruised reed He would not break, and the smoking flax He would not quench. He offended the model Jews by companying with the publicans and sinners. Even in the land's riff-raff He found the precious material for the Kingdom of God.¹

(a) The Outsiders.

Jesus taught that God cares passionately for those who are outside the Kingdom. Surely we cannot believe that God made any soul to be destroyed. Surely we could not think of God as remaining unmoved at the tragedy of degradation where He intended and hoped for ennoblement. People used to debate whether God is the Father of all men, or only the Father of the "elect."² Fortunately that debate is now to us one of the old, unhappy things—it sounds as far-off as the debate about the power and the punishment of witches. The God whom Jesus proclaimed is "Father, not only of those who have become citizens of the divine kingdom, but also of those who are without. The doctrine concerned both saints and sinners, and was proclaimed to all on highways and in market-places, irrespective of moral or social antecedents."³ Every man is a son of God, and must have a son's chance. The filial possibility of every human creature is the very marrow of the faith proclaimed in the name of Jesus.

It is when we come to explicate the word "Father," to fill it up with the content so richly provided in such places as the fifteenth chapter of the gospel of S. Luke, that we see how eloquent this doctrine is of God's regard for His wandering children, for all those who are self-exiled from the plenty and the dignity of His home. That superb

¹ H. J. Holtzmann, "N. T. Theol.," I, 136.

² Candlish, "Christian Doctrine of God," 62, and Fairbairn, "Christ in Modern Theology," 432, ff.

³ Bruce, "Kingdom of God," 210.

chapter is one magnificent crescendo. To begin with, the parable of the Lost Sheep shows us a love which loses one dear object out of a hundred. Again, in the parable of the Lost Coin, it is a love which loses one precious thing out of ten. Last of all, in the parable of the Lost Son, it is the love of a father who loses a son when he has only two sons altogether to lose. A one-per-cent loss is tolerable. A ten-per-cent loss is serious. A fifty-per-cent loss is a disaster. As a fact, in cold arithmetic, this is a startling enough climax in Luke's great chapter on the Lost Things. But the way of percentages is too coarse to picture God's love and God's loss. Fifty per cent. of infinity is still infinity, and it is an infinite love which God has to His estranged sons, and it is an infinite loss that He sustains in their casting-away. Although the prodigals have despised the Father's home and swung off contemptuously and lived in foolish riot, although they have blackened the family name and made it the market's proverb for all that is profligate, still the Father calls them sons, and He has a son's place and a son's welcome waiting for him.

(b) Citizens of the Kingdom.

Passing now from the consideration of those who are outside the Kingdom of God to those who are within, we have to notice God's gracious purposes for those who have come home to Him. On God, as our Father, devolve the duties of Provider, and on us, as sons, devolve certain other duties of love and obedience. We have neither the right to usurp God's place, nor the right to forget our own. "Be not anxious," said Jesus to His disciples, "saying, what shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewithal shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the Gentiles seek, for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. But seek ye first His Kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." "That is, let your care be the Kingdom, you yourselves will be your Father's care." (Matt. vi., 31-33.).¹

(c) The Social Aspect of the Kingdom.

Jesus taught us all to call God *Our* Father. By that

¹ Bruce, "Kingdom of God," 115.

short and significant pronoun he leagues us all in one grand *entente cordiale*, in one privileged brotherhood round the feet of God our Father. In the Greek original, of course, it is the word for "Father" which comes first, but the genius of our language places the word "our" before "Father." Perhaps it will not be too fantastic to remark that if this be the idiom of our speech, it is to be hoped that more and more it will be the idiom of our Christianity, to display and commend the social character of our faith. To claim God as "our" Father ought to be the immediate acknowledgement of all men as our brethren. "One is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren." (Matt. xxiii., 8.).

George Eliot repudiated God as inconceivable and immortality as incredible. She devoted herself to duty as the one peremptory thing. She said that she wished to live "without opium." Presumably she meant that belief in God and immortality acts on the soul like an opiate, fills men's minds with dreams of delight like a Turk's paradise, and makes them heedless of the need and the work of the world. She meant to say, probably, that the more religious a man is the less moral he is, that the more he dotes on heaven the less he does on earth. If this is not to misapprehend her meaning, then one can go on to say that there never was a more pathetic mistake than hers. To believe in God the Father must mean to be quickened in affection to all mankind. It means that it is still a rubric for the perfect morality to say, "Love God, and do what you like." The love of God is the very opposite of a moral opiate. It is to the moral life what inhaling oxygen is to the body. It excites and sustains the highest moral activities. It is the triumphant power which enables a good man to pack the benevolence of a philanthropist's day into an hour, and makes the record of any common man's life like the ministry of an angel.

(d) The Originality of the Doctrine.

Christ's doctrine of the Fatherhood of God is not to be deemed praiseworthy because it was a novelty which He introduced to enrich the world's religious thought, but because He lent to the old doctrine the emphasis and the power which give the doctrine its just empire in the realm

of faith. Men in the Old Testament times had called God "Father," but that does not alter the fact that it was Jesus who gave the name both currency and content. Men knew about anaesthetics before Simpson's time, but that does not diminish the fame of the man who first applied the common knowledge for the alleviation of pain and the saving of life. More than fifty years ago men were toying with wireless telegraphy, but that does not dim the fame of the man who lifted the device out of the world of scientific toys and made it a mighty engine in the world's commerce. Our Lord was not the first to call God Father, but He was the first to fathom the meaning and the power of the word. Formerly it was an unexplored conjecture, a pretty phrase which pious souls had flung out in their attempts to apprehend God. The precious name was there, like Saul, "hidden among the stuff." Jesus rid it of the smother of accidentals and made it the central and the essential truth. It was the breath and blood of His existence. It was to Him sustenance in life, and it was calmness and confidence in death. It was in this word that He found resource in all His weakness and courage in the face of every fear. The great originality of Jesus was not so much in what He taught as in what He was. It is the Personality of Jesus that has made the doctrine of the divine Fatherhood a saving and a quickening truth.¹

V. COMPARISON WITH OTHER VIEWS OF GOD.

(a) Pantheism.

The doctrine of God's Fatherhood carries on its very face the personality of the divine Being. The instincts of the heart leap to the thought that God is a Person who speaks to us, to whom we can speak. But this afflicted world, which seems to have been fated from the beginning to endure not only every combination of possible beliefs but also the flat denial of everything that revelation ever posited, has witnessed, among other prodigies, a refinement of intellectual ingenuity which stumbled at the personality of God. Personality, which seems so obvious and cheering to the ordinary mind, has been called a limitation of the Infinite,

¹ P. T. Forsyth, "Person and Place of Jesus Christ," 64, and Seeberg, "Grundwahrheiten," 122.

and so it has been repudiated. Pantheism, both in Europe and Asia, denies that God has personality, that He has self-consciousness and self-direction. The true formula of Pantheism is not that everything is God, but that God is everything, the All. If we want to be epigrammatic we can say that "Pantheism is materialism grown sentimental."¹ If we want to be scholastic we can say that Pantheism is "the theory which regards all finite things as merely aspects, modifications, or parts of one eternal and self-existent being, which views all material objects and all particular minds as derived from a single infinite substance."² Pantheism, therefore, means ultimately, not the divinity but rather the nothingness of all things seen and temporal. God is the infinite eternal reality in and behind all finite things. God is Brahma, reality, and all the seen world is only illusion, 'maya.'

The philosophical objection to Pantheism, as Prin. Caird has stated it, is that its idea of God "is the grave of all things, the productive source of nothing."³ "While Pantheism seems to meet the inextinguishable longing of the human spirit for emancipation from the narrow bounded life of selfish desires and pleasures, and for participation in that infinite life to which in the deepest basis of its nature it is allied, what it really attains is not union with the Infinite, but only a pallid and unreal mimicry of that union. For the Infinite to which it would unite us is not an Infinite of larger, fuller life, but an Infinite in which all thought and life are lost."

The plain man's objection to Pantheism is that it has no morals, that it refuses personality to God and immortality to man, and that it makes the intercourse of prayer impossible. It has the sickly, sweet odour of the Orient, of langour and fatalism. It lacks the healthy complexion of the life which has been swept clean and kept fresh by the vitality of men who feel imperially that they are masters of their own fate.

The god of Pantheism is pre-eminently immanent. But the Father-God of Jesus comes very very near to us. He is familiar with us, our Intimate, intensely interested in every

¹ Illingworth, "Divine Immanence," 69.

² Flint, "Anti-theistic Theories," 336.

³ "Fundamental Ideas," I, 197.

purpose and event of our daily lives, simply because we are His sons. The Christian doctrine seems to have every attraction to which Pantheism can lay just claim, and it is very rich in all those indispensable qualities which Pantheism so notoriously lacks, in vigorous attack on all life's foes and limitations, in morals, in the assurance of the life eternal, in the communion of prayer.

(b) Deism.

On the other hand, there have been opposite tendencies of thought which removed God further and further from man and his world till He became at last a remote and awful Being who could have no intercourse with earth at all. Certain ancient Gnostic systems made all communication between God and the world impossible. We have been amused to hear, in the gossip of the magazines, that 'majesty' will not speak to a photographer, even when 'majesty' goes to be photographed, and the poor operator has to signal his instructions to an aloof royalty through a long line of more and more august officials. This was the sort of thing that Gnosticism fancied in the eternal world, a divine etiquette, not unlike the ceremonial of a Hapsburg palace, to keep God from the possibility of pollution by our common touch. Between God and the world of men there had to be a long descending hierarchy of secondary beings, which at last tailed off in something undivine enough to do business with a world like ours.

The Deistical Theory, represented conspicuously by English writers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, recognised a Creator, but a Creator who, having tossed off the world, stood aloof from it altogether. President Faunce spoke of some people who figure God as being like an engineer "who started this locomotive of a world, pulled the lever wide open, and then leaped from the cab."¹ Deism pictured a God who made everything at first so perfect that any subsequent interference on His part would be *infra dignitatem* for a divine Being; it would amount to a confession of imperfection in the original design and execution.

The professional theologians object to Deism on the

¹ qu. Fosdick, "Meaning of Prayer," 94.

ground that its view of sin is too slight. Others, again, object that Deism makes God external to our lives, and His action on us and our world purely arbitrary.¹ A philosopher like Principal Caird says in criticism of Deism that God's action must not be simply action *ON* us but action *IN* us, "losing the character of externality and becoming identified with us—the action not of an external creator or ruler, but of an inward inspirer, whose thought becomes our thought, whose will passes into our will, the light of all our seeing, the inspiration of all our doing."² The plain man's objection to the kind of God that Deism provides is just that He has been robbed of all nearness, intimacy, warmth. It is a chill theory. It takes the thrust out of a man's arm and the iron from his blood. It is as inert as cold water in an open dish. The Christian's faith, the belief in the Father, is motive, like dry steam in a closed vessel. All the impulses, warmth, intimacy, which the plain man misses in Deism, he finds royally given in the Father-God of our Lord Jesus.

(c) Mariolatry, the "Motherhood" of God.

In the conception of God as Father we have everything that can appease the intellect and the emotions. We conserve the majesty of God in a more real way than Deism. Prin. Fairbairn rightly maintained that "the only absolute, natural kingship is neither legal, a creature of law, nor imperial, a creature of power, but paternal, a creation of nature. . . . The authority of a Father is, of all authorities, the most real and the most enduring." The true kingdom, in a word, is fatherhood.³

In the conception of God as Father we conserve the nearness of God in a far more real and kindly way than in Pantheism. We satisfy the philosophical demand that the relation between God and ourselves should be a necessary and not an arbitrary one. There is in us a compelling reason why we should seek God, for we are His sons, and there is in God the compelling motive of His Fatherhood why He should reveal Himself to us. There is a clear and

¹ Bruce, "Apologetics," 119.

² "Fundamental Ideas," I, 124.

³ "Christ in Modern Theology," 434-435.

noble sense in which we can still say that as much depends for God on us as for us on God.

The physical sciences at first tended to remove God altogether from the world, to elevate Him to a cold and impotent transcendence. Secondary causes were all-in-all, and the suggestion of interference with nature, as in the idea of a miracle, was as intolerable as the advocacy of rebellion on the steps of the throne. But the newer physical science, as expounded by Darwin and his successors, has brought back again the banished God. "God is everywhere present in nature, or He is nowhere."¹ A great many theologies could be mentioned—Mahomedanism, Rabbinism, Platonism, Philonism, Socinianism, High Calvinism—which removed God far from the world, which suspended Him *in vacuo*, or prisoned Him in a lonely and inaccessible state. The heart of man was starved on such a God. The Celestial Potentate might command awe, but the sons of men crave for a God whose fingers know how to unlock the chambers of the heart's affections. This was why men responded so eagerly to our Lord's teaching about the Fatherhood of God. Then, when in the course of ages, ecclesiastical statesmanship had hardened the Father into a gloomy despot and the Son into a stern and forbidding potentate, a *Rex tremendae majestatis*, the heart's longing for love, for nearness and understanding, found satisfaction in the worship of the Virgin. Repulsed by the cold and remote majesty that the church painted in her pictures and preached in her pulpits, the sons of men were drawn, as Eichendorf's hymn says, "heavenward to the great mother-heart" of Mary.² Nay, so great is the yearning of the human heart for intimacy and love in God that we find good Protestants beginning to talk about the "motherhood" of God.

If people would only remember that the fifteenth chapter of Luke's gospel is still in the New Testament, they would not need to risk such perilous cults as that of Mary, nor would they find anything either clever or comforting in speaking about the "motherhood" of God. In the Father-God, whom Jesus proclaimed, we have everything that is desirable, a strength more than fatherly, a tenderness more

¹ "Lux Mundi," 73.

² "Der deutsche Psalter," 412.

than motherly. This doctrine of the divine Fatherhood must be the final revelation about God. It satisfies, so far as we can see, every condition laid down by the intellect. It honours and enhances every moral interest. It appeases every good emotion of the heart.

VI. OBJECTIONS TO THE DOCTRINE OF GOD'S FATHERHOOD.

(a) Impatient Self-Sufficiency.

It may be worth while to note the pert saying of Heine, "We are of age, and do not need a Father's care."¹ This is just the impatience of overweening youth. It is a sort of bravado which, as in Heine's own case, turns out to be pitiful both in its poor pretence and in its humbling sequel. It reminds one of the heroics of a schoolboy who, after a course of "dreadful" literature, goes off with one stolen sixpence to be a pirate king in a cellar, only to find that after two days of quite unheroic starvation he is glad enough to creep home and ask his mother for a piece of bread.

(b) Fatherhood, an enervating doctrine.

After what we have said about the character of the Father and the discipline by which He tutors His sons, we need to say very little about an ethical difficulty which some have advanced against the doctrine of God's Fatherhood. The indictment is that to live out our days in this faith is to import an element of weakness into our scheme of living. It is to prevent men from being manly, and life from being alive. It is to call the soldier from the mud and blood of the trenches to the luxury and the pampering of a hydropathic.

The idea of Fatherhood which seems to lie at the back of this criticism is that of a man whose judgment has been blinded by his affections, who abets or excuses slackness when he ought to enforce diligence, who in an excess of forgiving geniality thrusts favour and pardon on his child when these are the last things on earth that the child values. After what we have already seen of the Father whom Jesus

¹ qu. Bruce, "Kingdom of God," 119.

trusted we need not tarry in answering the criticism. We may respect the criticism because it is made in the name of a strenuous and vigilant morality. But we are aware that it rests on a wrong conception of what the divine Fatherhood means. Heine, flippant even on his death-bed, when he was assured by the priest of the forgiveness of God, replied "that forgiveness was certain—it was God's business to forgive: "*Bien sûr qu'il me pardonnera; c'est son métier.*"² But every preacher, whose message has been informed by the teaching of the Bible has had to tell men emphatically what is the condition and what are the consequences of pardon, namely, "repentance and the fruits of a holy life," and to believe the article of forgiveness otherwise is to believe something which God never intended.³

(c) The Ruthless Facts of Life.

The grandest difficulty after all is the trouble of those who consider the doctrine too good news to be true. To many realists the doctrine is just pinchbeck poetry and buckram romance. The hard facts of life grind on in spite of the poetry of the poets and the romances of the idyllists. Our attention is directed to a hundred, a thousand facts that cry out in protest against the divine Fatherhood. Ingenious devices for inflicting pain, shame and suffering heaped on the innocent, good hopes and noble plans frustrated, crime feasted and goodness crucified, true worth neglected or gagged and mediocrity or actual unworth throned and crowned—everywhere we see life invaded and degraded by things which a wise and good Father would have prevented if He could.

All this brings us back again to the agitation of an old and difficult question, a question whose students are reckoned by the hundred, whose literature fills whole libraries. But, fortunately, we do not need to go into all that now. Those who know the most elementary facts of the life of our Lord will not be unduly perturbed by such criticisms. Jesus had a very large experience in the sorrows of the world. Yet, for all the bareness and the hardness of life, as He lived it Himself, as He saw others living

² Freud, "Wit in its Relation to the Unconscious," 76.

³ Jeremy Taylor, "Holy Living," IV, 1.

it, He persisted in calling God Father. He carried the blithe doctrine of the Galilean days right down to the black tragedy of the Cross. It was the undimmed assurance of the love of His Father that brought Him peace in the throes of His agony, just as it had given Him joy and endurance in the days of His ministry. With Jesus—and this is the very striking fact in view of the criticism which we are now noticing—the Fatherhood of God is a doctrine more calculated for the days of sable skies and torn waters than for the days of smooth seas and shining sun. Contradiction, misunderstanding, hunger, weariness, tears, disappointment, desertion, the very cross—in spite of all this Jesus persisted in the faith of God's Fatherhood. The ages can tell if His confidence has been justified.

If men would follow the teaching of Jesus, life might still have its element of mystery, but it would no longer have its torture of mystification. Jesus revealed God's Fatherhood and man's Sonship. If we miss the relish and the prize of life, it can only be because we have preferred to call ourselves serfs when God was calling us Sons, only because we have chosen to neglect God as the great Phantom or to defy Him as the great Despot, when we ought to have loved Him as the great Father.

CHAPTER III.

REVELATION.

Matt. 6, 9. Hallowed be Thy Name.

I. THE SELF-REVEALING GOD.

The revelation of God contained in the Bible has been the guidance of the best men in the best ages of the world. But exactly how that revelation was mediated is another of those questions which are so inevitable in the asking and so baffling in the answer. As soon as ever reflection begins we ask ourselves, or our monitors, what it means to say that God "spake" to Abraham.¹ Did God utter actual words in the ear of His servant, or did He give indications of His divine desires, and guarantee all these by some miraculous accompaniments? Or, was the "speaking" of God only the dictate and the persuasion of a conscience that God had enlarged and illumined? And is this inward enlightenment a worse or a worthier way than the external communication of truth guaranteed by portents?

On the part of God Himself, what was it that induced Him, or compelled Him, to reveal Himself at all? Did God declare His own character and announce His purpose for this world of ours just because, if we may put it so, the whim took Him? Or was there something in the very nature of God which made the revelation of Himself a thing inevitable? Are we to conceive of God as necessarily, by His very nature, a self-revealing Spirit, or are we to think of Him as some Lord lifted up in dread might who, in rare and arbitrary moments of unbending, condescends to drop pieces of important information regarding Himself and His realm? There can be no doubt that we would prefer, if the facts of the case permit it, to think of God as constrained by His very nature to make Himself known to the children of men. The more we love God and the more we prize and

¹ See Bruce, "Chief End of Revelation," 93, ff.

enjoy our life in Him, the more we shudder to think that there might have been any accident, any overlook or neglect, that could have prevented or impoverished our communion with Him.

Now, many writers have shown with great cogency that there is an element in man which has its affinity in God, and, more to our present purpose, that there is an element in God which has its affinity and complement in man. "If there be a divine element in man"—to repeat the excellent words of Principal Caird—"there must be, so to speak, a human element in God, of which the whole spiritual life and history of the world is the manifestation."¹ Man cannot be explained without God, nor God without man. "When," if we may listen to further wise words from the same useful writer,² "in the language of Christian thought we say that all things exist 'for the glory of God,' that 'of Him and through Him and to Him are all things,' that 'the invisible things of Him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and godhead,' that finite spirits are 'chosen in Him,' that is, in Christ, 'before the foundation of the world'—what such expressions imply is not merely that all things owe their existence to God's creative will and power, or even that the divine thought is the constituent principle of all finite things; but further that God fulfils Himself, realises His own nature in the existence of the world, and above all in the spiritual nature and life and destiny of man: that, with reverence be it said, the very being and blessedness of God are implicated in the existence, the perfection, the salvation of finite souls."

Now if such a statement as this appears temerarious to those who have been long accustomed to a deistic conception of God, or if it appears hard to those whose minds cannot run comfortably in Hegelian grooves, or if it appears to others to be precariously on the edge of Pantheism, we may perhaps be able to overcome all the scruples and avoid all the difficulties if we drop the dialectic jargon and go back again to the simple and profound word "Father."

To think of God as the great Autocrat, dwelling in a lonely and awful isolation, self-contained and self-sufficing,

¹ "Fundamental Ideas," I, 156.

² Ibid, 158.

is, in reality, to pauperise God, to make Him the inferior of His creature, to rob Him of that one element which confers all the honour and worth on life as we know it, the element of self-communicating love. But if God be truly a Father, then love, warm, constant, self-giving, is not His accidental but His essential quality. God's nature cannot be parental without being ministrant.¹ Fatherhood has no meaning apart from sonship, and sonship has no meaning apart from fatherhood, and so the Father had to give Himself to and for His children. It may appear a very bold thing, a thing to be condemned in a booming word like 'anthropomorphism,' which sounds terrible, but really carries very little terror, to say that the existence of God and the existence of man are as intimately and organically connected as fatherhood and sonship, that God and man are meaningless apart from each other; but the longer one reflects on this matter the more clearly one sees that this is the only way to think honourably of God and adequately of man.

II. MAN AND THE DIVINE REVELATION.

(a) Supernaturalistic and Naturalistic Views of Revelation.

If the quality of fatherhood declares to us that God is love, self-revealing, self-sacrificing, then the quality of sonship declares that man has the capacity for receiving and enjoying the revelation of God, that he can wear the 'name' of God so as to hallow it, that he can appropriate and understand the love of God, and that he can give that reciprocity of love which is the only return that self-sacrificing love can ask or receive.

There is no need for us in this place to enter upon the use of the words 'revelation' and 'inspiration.' There is something very unreal about a controversy in which one advocate, Prin. Fairbairn, can say that "God inspires and man reveals,"² while another disputant can say that "revelation is the word we use when we view the matter from the side of God, inspiration when we view it from the side of man."³ Perhaps we shall manage to conduct our argument

¹ Clarke, "Outline," 140.

² "Christ in Modern Theology," 496.

³ Inge, "Faith and its Psychology," 120.

sufficiently well without troubling the word 'inspiration' very much.

With regard, then, to the reception of the revelation which God gives, there are two opposed views, and regarding these two views we may say, as of many another pair of conflicting opinions, that neither of them is right and neither of them is wrong. Some would like to make revelation exclusively the work of God. It is demanded by these claimants that, as God's being transcends nature, so His action also should transcend the necessitated order of cause and effect in extraordinary, because free and personal ways.¹ Revelation was given and received in such a way that the scriptures had plenary inspiration and were absolutely inerrant. But advancing thought has made this view of revelation very hard to maintain in any consistent way. Theories of plenary inspiration and inerrancy now-a-days are not resisted with heat and ingenuity, as if they were hateful lies. They are simply dismissed with an impatient gesture: they have the worst fault in the whole world—they are uninteresting. In the product called revelation the human co-efficient seems to have grown larger and larger till at last man's part in the result almost threatens, if not to eclipse God's part, at least to claim more of our attention. Modern criticism has shown that revelation has always been progressive, that it has been completely dependent on racial and cultural conditions, or on the unique capacities and services of those whom we call religious geniuses. At last there starts up a writer like Bousset, who, to the regret of Dr. Orr,² wishes to abolish the supernatural altogether, and to make revelation nothing more than the result of man's own adventuring in the realm of the spiritual. "It is undeniable that religious truth was apprehended by an activity of the mind, and it was not unnatural to advance to the further position of supposing that reason which was able to appropriate religious truth had also been competent to discover it."³ One theologian says that revelation signifies "God revealing himself in a *supernatural* way for a special purpose." Another theologian says—and probably

¹ Orr, "Revelation and Inspiration," 8; Bruce, "Chief End of Revelation," 57.

² "Revelation and Inspiration," 31-36.

³ Paterson, "Rule of Faith," 92.

his words are kindlier and waken happier thoughts—that God's revelation "lies round us like a besieging sea, and human aspiration, prayer and striving lift the sluices, and let the ocean in."¹

(b) Revelation, the Co-operation of the Spirit of God and the kindred Spirit of Man.

Perhaps in this connection we begin to suspect that it is time to give up altogether the use of such words as 'natural' and 'supernatural.' In the line of enquiry that he followed in his "Reign of Law," the late Duke of Argyll found himself forced to abandon the distinction between 'natural' and 'supernatural' as "artificial, arbitrary and unreal."² These two words are so equivocal, so vague, so irritating to believers and unbelievers alike.

Let us try by an illustration to set the matter more clearly before our minds. Not so long ago education meant the activities of an armed pedagogue who in "extraordinary, free and personal" ways crammed knowledge into reluctant and resisting children. Boys and masters were born enemies. The boys had no sympathy with the masters, and it is certain that the masters did not know the boys, and did not try to know them. Now we hear a master who says of a "dour and disobedient boy," "I won him over by interesting myself in him. He discovered that I was only human after all."² Education, which since the days when Cyrus went to school has been the tormented battle-ground of all the faddists, is at last in a wholesome and hopeful condition. Education is no more the battle, but the co-partnery between master and pupil. The master has striven hard to *know* his pupil. Indeed there is hardly a department of intellectual activity where such earnestness in investigation has been displayed, and where such gratifying results have been secured as in the department of pedagogical psychology. For the learner, school is no longer, as it used to be, the citadel of an ogre, and learning is no more something distasteful and alien which is pushed upon him. If the end of education be conceived as the entry of the child into the world of the master, it has been found essen-

¹ See Cairns, "Christianity in the Modern World," 84.

² p. 50.

² Neil, "A Dominie's Log," 20.

tial that the master first of all should enter into the world of the child. It is easily seen what a revolution this means. Education, on the child's part, is no more the accumulation of arbitrary facts, but growth, the assimilation of knowledge, the incorporation of the material of culture into the very fibre of the child's mind, just as the body's growth is not mere accretion of particles, but an appropriation and incorporation in the very tissues and bones of the material which we call food. In a word education is not something *given* by the master and *received* by the pupil, but the happy joint achievement of both.

This illustration may be helpful, if not indeed regulative. We shall now perceive the reasonableness of dropping a great many of the old technicalities which were once used in discussing the subject of revelation, such as 'natural' and 'supernatural,' 'general' and 'special.' "We come perpetually in the relations of God and man to a point where the same thing has to be described as at once human and divine—as present in virtue of a divine causality and a human condition, neither of which exists except as calling for or called for by the other."¹ Just as education is always the work of the master and yet always the work of the pupil, just as education would be hopeless if there were not a mind in the pupil kindred to and co-operating with the mind of the master, so, we may surely argue, revelation is always the work of God, and, in that sense, if we like to say so, supernatural, and yet revelation is always the work of man, and, therefore, if we like to say so, natural. We may add further, encouraged by our analogy, that the whole process of revelation would be impossible if there were not a spirit in man kindred to and co-operating with the Spirit of God. As Goethe says,²

Were not the eye kin to the sun
It never could behold the sunshine.
Were there no element divine in us,
How could divine things ever charm us?

If we insist on 'natural' revelation too much we seem to be limiting God or even banishing Him from any present interest in His own world. If we belabour the word 'supernatural' too sorely, then we need to be constantly trimming

¹ Denney, "Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation," 313.

² "Zahme Xenien," III; *Sämt Werke*, Cotta, IV, 56.

and hedging, whittling down our 'supernatural,' explaining that revelation is no "playing on a flute," no arbitrary thaumaturgy, that it is always historically conditioned, that it leaves men with their individualities unimpaired, that it invents no new vehicle of communication and always employs current literary forms. For instance, the Reformation polemic claimed utter deference to scripture. The scriptures were declared fit for the high rôle of supreme and sole guide, for they had the essential notes of authority, perspicuity, sufficiency and efficacy. But this high claim could not weather the storm of criticism without undergoing very considerable modification. "At the same time qualifications and explanations were attached to the statement of these perfections, which made it appear that the object of the affirmations was not so much the library of scripture as the system of saving truth which is contained in scripture. When we speak of the volume we must accompany each proposition with a reservation: it is authoritative, but only within a certain range; sufficient, but only for light upon the way of salvation; perspicuous, but in many parts obscure; efficacious, but in some passages unilluminating and even unedifying."¹

It appears, therefore, that it is most satisfactory to say that revelation is the act of God in fatherly love seeking to be known to His children, and the co-operative act of man, in virtue and vindication of his sonship, receiving and reciprocating the love of God.

On this understanding, nobody need be alarmed for the supremacy of God in the matter of revelation, as in every other direction. Evidently in the organic relation of father and son, fatherhood must be the more striking factor, first in thought and first in importance. No matter what be our theory of creation, whether the modern conception of an age-long development, or the old idea of a magic word and—hey, presto!—a finished world, God must, on either view, be supreme. In the same way, no matter what be our theory of revelation, whether the old naive idea of a printed Bible, perfect down to its grammar and punctuation, shot down from above the stars, or the modern idea of a slow evolution and co-operation in which the spirit of man had an essential part to play, we cannot overlook the fact that

¹ Paterson, "Rule of Faith," 61.

God, in both ways of it, is the initiative and sustaining power. If there is a divine element in man which finds its complement in God, if there be a restlessness in our bosoms which is stilled only on the bosom of God, we must remember that it was God that made us, and that He made us *so*.

Israel was the first nation to know the true God. Why should Israel, which, politically, was a starveling people, have had that honour? We may view the chain of facts from the upper end, and we may say that God "elected" Israel. But we may also view the long chain of co-operating causes from the lower end, and we may declare that, owing to her unique geographical position, owing to the very remarkable experiences through which the nation passed, owing to the peculiar type of mind which all this history and environment produced, owing to the inexplicable appearance in Israel of men who were endowed with a rare faculty for understanding the world-situation in its causes and consequences, this nation had a spiritual genius. All these factors, which we have now reviewed, enabled Israel to outstrip other nations in the culture of the soul, so that she was the first to leap into the possession of a faith that was at once ethical and monotheistic. But still, it has to be protested that this is *not* a 'naturalistic' explanation. The geographical and climatic conditions of the land, the historic fortunes and calamities of the people and the advent of men in their midst with profound spiritual insight were not things that simply "happened." They were things purposed and achieved by God. Ultimately the explanation we find given of the fortunes of Israel and her distinction among the peoples by any one of the sane modern scholars, say by Sir George Adam Smith in his "Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament,"¹ is just as properly called 'supernatural' as the explanation offered by, say, Justin Martyr, who pictures the Holy Spirit acting upon the sacred writer as "the plectrum striking the lyre," or by Athenagoras, who likens the Spirit's influence to a flute-player blowing a flute.

III. NAMES AND "THE NAME OF GOD."

"The name of God," according to the invaluable Cruden, signifies "anything whereby God's will and nature are

¹ Chap. IV.

better known to us." Perhaps nothing finer in the way of definition can be adduced than the Shorter Catechism's statement that God's name means "all that whereby He maketh Himself known," His "titles, attributes, ordinances, word, works, and whatsoever He is pleased to make Himself known by."

It is pretty banal to say that there is nothing in a name. Names have degenerated even since the days of the dramatist who asked, "What's in a name?" Names are now like the letters and numbers we see attached to cabs and motor-cars, mere marks of identification. They tell us nothing whatever about the character of the objects to which they are affixed. But, what is more alarming still, the population grows so rapidly and human ingenuity in the invention of new names is so barren that hundreds of people bear the same name, and so names have come to be useless even as marks of identification. And when we turn from the names of persons to the names of things we keep on asking the same question, "What's in a name?" It is a standing jest to point out how non-significant the names of our streets are. We have "avenues" which are misnamed both according to etymology and usage, for they are not approaches to anything, and they have no trees. We have "lanes" which are broad and wealthy highways. We have "terraces" on the level ground.

Yet even in our degenerate days a name still means something. For example, we cannot have any intimacy or influence with a person till we have been "introduced" to that person and introduction, according to the usage of our society, means just the giving and the getting of a name. We may easily understand that there was a time, not so very long ago, when a man's name did disclose something about him, where he came from, where he lived, whose son he was, what occupation he followed, or of what complexion he was. We are not surprised to learn that in olden times, and at the present day among peoples of inferior culture, names are looked upon as potent magical things, that to know a person's true name is always to have a means of gaining power over him.¹ Behind this superstition lies the truth that it is only by knowing a man's "name," that is,

¹ See Bade, "Old Testament in the Light of To-day," 103, and Moffatt, in the *Expositor's Greek Testament*, on Rev. 2, 17.

his real nature, that one can either harm him or find help in him.

Schultz tells us that "for the Hebrews, as for the earlier peoples in general, a name is no colourless appellation. It must really express the character of the person indicated."¹ From all these indications—so obvious and yet so noteworthy—it may be readily understood that the revelation of God's name is just the manifestation of His character.

IV. THE BLESSING OF REVELATION.

(a) The Honour conferred on Man by Revelation.

It is superfluous to make any remark at this point on the content of revelation. Our whole present study is nothing but the unfolding of all that the revelation of God involves. The immense topics which claim our attention in the Lord's Prayer, the Fatherhood of God, the Kingdom, the Forgiveness of Sins, the Delivery from Evil, are the primary contents of the revelation which God was pleased to vouchsafe to our race.

But we may tarry here for a moment to notice what an honour there is, for us men, in the revelation which God has made regarding the "infinite secret of His own being and regarding the final purpose of our existence here. We know how men have craved the intimacy of the powerful or the illustrious. Boswell, for instance, courted and cultivated the friendship of Johnson, and he looked upon the favour which the great man showed him as the culminating distinction of his life. No doubt it was an honour for Boswell to be admitted to some degree of familiarity with Johnson. But Boswell's distinction came to him, not from any grace on the part of his idol, but solely from his own passion for notoriety, his pushful vanity and his superb faculty for disregarding snubs. The honour of knowing God, however, comes to us from the gracious act of God Himself. He made us in His own image. He made us with an instinct and a capacity for Himself. Our faculty for knowing God and our actual intimacy with Him are doubly honourable, honourable to Him who gave us the talent, and honourable to us who have improved our capacity. It is this that has

¹ "O. T. Theology," E. T. II, 112.

made us great, and it is this that has showed us how great God is.

(b) Man found Himself only by finding God.

We may go on to show what blessing and profit have come to us from the revelation of God. Here emerges one of the grand facts. Man did not find himself till he had found God. In the Old Testament world we have to remember that "the Hebrew came down from his thought of God upon the world—he did not rise from the world up to his thought of God. His contemplation of nature and providence and the life of man was never of the nature of a search after God whom he did not know, but always of a recognition of God whom he knew."¹ And in the New Testament world we have to recollect that "Jesus had a new insight into the nature of God, and out of this there sprang a new foresight as to human destiny and a new ideal as to human life."² We might go on and generalise in the same way about the Gentile world. It is easy to see that, in the progress of culture, it was not the enhancing of the value of man that elevated men's thoughts about God. It was always the clearer, higher, worthier view of God that added to the conception of man's dignity and worth. Man read himself through his God. Before ever there could be any worthy anthropology there had to be a worthy theology.

It was always in his religion that man knew himself. At length, with the deepening knowledge of the age, man came to call God "Thou," to enjoy a personal intercourse with the Eternal, and then man came to know that he was not an infinitesimal unit lost in a seething, endless mass, but a personality, like God, an individual whose worth before God could not be diminished or masked by the billions of creatures living on the earth or the millions of worlds swirling in space. Naumann quite justly remarks that it is in religion that men grow up to be persons, and he very warrantably goes on to regret that the enemies of religion should be so ignorant of what a mighty engine for the uplift of society they are repudiating when they despise religion.³ It is not without significance that the first un-

¹ A. B. Davidson, in Hastings' Dictionary, s. v. "God."

² Cairns, "Christianity in the Modern World," 41.

³ "Gotteshilfe," 409.

equivocal condemnation of slavery came from a Christian, the Dominican monk Soto.¹ One has only to look a little into history, or abroad into our contemporary world, to see that where gods are common men are cheap. Only where Christianity has introduced the pure, spiritual conception of God has man reached any adequate idea of his value and destiny. In fine, we may say that the history of our progressive civilisation is nothing but the mirror in which the developing knowledge of God has been reflected.

Surely this is a startling fact, worthy of attention and emphasis. And surely no man could dwell on such a fact without emotions of the deepest gratitude. What intellectual darkness, what social anarchy, what moral degradation and cheapening of human life are found where the knowledge of God is wanting or rudimentary! The spectacle of a sunken barbarous humanity is one to make us despair. We perceive with appalling clearness that the degradation needs the better knowledge. But on the very back of this perception comes the chill suspicion that it is just this ignorance and this degradation that incapacitate men for the higher knowledge. Even if God did call, we might very well question whether degraded man had any faculty to hear Him or to understand His speech. And yet, in spite of all these inherent difficulties and improbabilities, when God did speak men had the ears to hear, the heart to understand and the will to respond to the message of the Eternal. A man must be stone blind if he does not see the consequence of these things, and a man must have a heart cold and dead as iron if he does not give thanks on every remembrance of them. The progressive revelation of God, culminating in the doctrine of Jesus Christ, showed us the perfect God, and the revelation of the perfect God challenged and enabled us to be perfect men.

V. CONSEQUENT RESPONSIBILITIES.

Now we have to go on to notice the responsibilities, the holy trust, that God's gracious revelation of Himself has laid upon the sons of men. In the very first petition of our Lord's Prayer we are taught to say, "Hallowed be Thy name." There is hardly a better exposition of this primary

¹ Lecky, "Rationalism," II, 333, fn.

petition than the one which we find in the Shorter Catechism. "In the first petition we pray, That God would enable us and others to glorify Him in all that whereby He maketh Himself known, and that He would dispose of all things to His own glory." All that we can say about this petition is but the expansion of what has been put so well by the Westminster divines.

(a) The Reverent Use of God's Name.

We ought to be very circumspect in our use of God's names. It is a matter for congratulation that profanity has dropped out of the world of respectability and is regarded as a distinct mark of underbreeding. But if there has come a temperance, and even an abstinence, in the use of coarse and vulgar profanity, there has also come a very riot of that easy slang which treats flippantly and familiarly the most sacred things, and it is by no means a useless admonition which enjoins men to be careful, even scrupulous, in the use of every term which is ever used for divine things. One might plead, even with passion, for what might be called "a sane Puritanism" in our speech. Of course, blasphemy itself is so clearly a mark of ignorance, if not indeed of a vicious temperament, that few persons need any dissuasive from the senseless and revolting habit of profane swearing. But there are some well-known expletives which, although they have a certain attractive smartness, a certain vigour and bite and a very wide vogue, ought, nevertheless, to be avoided. There is not the least need to give any example of the speech that is to be reprobated. The foolish, flashy thing is only too common.

It is, no question, very easy to pooh-pooh any grave concern about these interjectional adornments of our speech, very easy to raise a laugh against old-maidish precisianism. Mrs. Grundy does not enjoy a very wide popularity, and any assault on that ancient prude is an easy road to applause. It is easy to expose that meticulous morality which is perspiringly busy about the tithing of mint, and dead cold in the presence of righteousness and all the other weighty matters of the law. But, on the other hand, it is so easy to slip into the unthinking and degrading use of God's name, so easy, to such imitative creatures as we are, to catch the common trick of flippancy, that, I fancy, it is more honour-

ing to the Almighty and more conducive to the dignity and elegance of our own speech if we avoid altogether those phrases which swing so suspiciously between mere exclamations and the vain adjuration of God.

This same "sane Puritanism" ought not merely to regulate our style of speech, but it ought to save us from falling into any maudlin or mechanical religious habit. There is nothing wrong, for example, with the custom, prevalent in certain circles, of bowing the head every time the name of our Lord is mentioned. Indeed a Protestant, and a Puritan at that, might applaud the practice, provided always that the humbling of the heart went with the bowing of the head. But if this be a habit which easily, or often, means nothing but the thoughtless bobbing of the head, if it is a good thing perverted till at last our holy things have become cheap to ourselves and foolish to those who are the critical observers of our ways, then, I would say, it is a custom which, on the whole, were better avoided.

Nor, again, should we allow ourselves the familiar, cloying forms of address that some good people permit themselves in their prayers. Francis of Assisi, the "troubadour of heavenly love," and Samuel Rutherford, the Scottish saint, constantly spoke about "sweet Jesus." We have often heard people referring to "the dear Lord" with an off-hand ease. In the interest of reverence all these overhoneyed phrases ought to be proscribed. *Hallowed be Thy name!* Men need not be like the Jews, who would not utter God's name at all. But if people pray the prayer which our Lord taught, and if they use its words sincerely, they will incline in their daily conversation rather to reserve and silence in reference to God and holy things, lest by a facile and a sensuous familiarity they make the name of God into a common mock.

(b) A Challenge to Worship.

We cannot help concluding, when we ponder this petition of our Lord's prayer, that here we have not only an incentive to worship, but also a rule for the regulation of our worship. Worship is a royal word. It represents reverence at its highest. It expresses homage that has passed beyond the tribute of admiration and become the ardour of adoration. Worship, it is said, means simply "worth-ship." We

address magistrates by the courtesy title of "Your Worship." We come into God's presence to acknowledge His worth, and the worship which we offer Him is just the recognition of His worth-ship. God has revealed to us His great name, and beyond that revelation of the name of God the human heart knows nothing more awful and yet tender, more sublime and yet beautiful, more just and yet loving. If we really have come to know God's name, how can we help worshipping Him? How can we help approaching Him with wonder in our heart and praise upon our lips? One is very sick of the parroting of certain ingenious reasons that are offered to indifferent people to induce them to attend worship. The reason for worshipping God is very simple, and it needs no ingenuity to enforce it. God has revealed His name, His character, and that revelation has carried captive every thought and imagination of our hearts. The name of God has vindicated itself as the purest, highest, most cleansing thing in all the wide orbit of our knowledge, and, therefore, we who know God *cannot refrain from worshipping Him.*

(c) A Rubric for Worship.

Not only is there in this petition an inducement and a compulsion to worship—there is also a guide for the conduct of our public worship. If we will but give sober attention to what we say in this petition there must come to us a pretty clear guidance as to how we are to comport ourselves in the solemn act of worship. The spirit of the petition ought to bring us some definite knowledge of what we ought to crave in our supplications, to rejoice over in our anthems of praise and to declare in our preaching.

Everybody is painfully aware of the age-long dispute that has gone on about the proper ceremonial that is to be used in the solemnisation of worship. On the one hand, we have what, without offence, may be called the free-and-easy style of the Little Bethels. This variety of worship has a fervent and glowing utterance in free prayer, a stentorian and jovial style of singing, and a platform eloquence which indeed has had no schooling but which has a powerful impact upon the masses, because its vernacular is racy of the soil or merry with all the rude and ready wit of the pavement. At the other extreme, we have the High Mass, a gleaming,

dignified, brilliantly dressed, ceremoniously conducted pageant. Here we have a solemn pomp, speaking in the old classic tongue, accompanied by a music which well knows how to touch the deepest emotional centres of man's being.

The conflict between these ideals of worship is long and bitter, and, unfortunately, it seems to get more insensate as the years pass. This debate is old, senile—but its senility is raucous. One might venture to suggest humbly that, for most men, a worship which is a compromise between these acute extremes would be more in keeping with the idea that worship is the glorifying of God and the hallowing of His name. Where there are jocularities, noises and rompings, there cannot be much subduing of the spirit or much recognition of the awe and wonder of God's presence. As for the Mass, those of us who stand outside the glamour of the Romish tradition and can bring to it a spirit of sympathetic criticism have felt acutely that the Mass is not worship at all, but only a consummate piece of acting. We do not say this, wishing to give offence to any of our brethren in the Romish church. Nor do we make the statement in any spirit of blind polemics. We wish simply to point out that the High Mass is a ceremonial not primarily directed to God, for His greater glory, but a performance directed to men, like any other piece of histrionics, to dazzle men's eyes and to impress and awe their minds. A worship addressed to God would not need all the processioning and genuflection, all the swinging of censers, all the display and the change of glittering apparel which we know in the Mass, for, of course, nobody could think to impress God, or to force His applause by any spectacular display of that sort. Prin. Fairbairn has made the acute observation that "when man attempts to do the highest offices, he tends to do them in a way which he himself feels to be agreeable, just as if he argued, 'What is agreeable to me must be acceptable to the Deity.'"¹

We conclude, then, that worship ought to be simple, reverent, orderly. There is the temptation, on the one hand to make worship into a jolly sing-song or a diverting lecture. On the other hand, there is the temptation to make worship a mere scenic orgy. Surely we dare not

¹ "Philosophy of the Christian Religion," 28.

allow ourselves to fancy either that God is amused by our rare wit, or that He is impressed by the parade of our calisthenics and wardrobes. Simplicity, reverence, order—these are the characteristics of all true worship.

(d) A Rule for All Life.

Again we note that it is not only the hour of the sanctuary that is covered by this petition of our Lord's Prayer. In every hour and action of our life we ought to be guided by one supreme motive, the desire to hallow God's name. God's purposes have been committed to our diligence. We are bound to administer all our private life and to sentinel all our world so that nothing within us and nothing around us will reflect ought but the goodness and the mercy of God. Dr. Bruce said, "When we speak of God as the God of grace, we mean to represent Him as a Power not ourselves making for mercy . . . a power acting as a healing, redeeming influence on the moral and spiritual diseases of the world."¹ Accordingly, we have to say that the true hallowing of God's name is co-operation in His gracious purposes. What we actually have here in this petition is a formula for the highest ends in civilisation, for the redeeming of our earth from the power of the beast, for the banishing of all selfishness and crime, of all shame and ignorance, of all foul and painful things that now make it a satire to call this God's world, or that make it hard for men to know God and love Him.

In the vivid pages of Gibbon we read how the games of the circus, bloody and degrading as they were, went on even after the emperors had declared for Christianity, even after the lords of the Roman world had expressed a desire that the revolting spectacles might cease. In 404 Honorius was celebrating his triumph over the Goths. Gladiatorial contests were a feature of the abandonment of the day. Rome's groundlings were being gratified by the sight and the smell of blood when Telemachus, an Asiatic monk, leaped into the arena and forbade the continuance of those exhibitions which had so long ministered to the worst passions of a ghoulish populace. The people, goaded to madness by the monk's interference with their darling pastime, rose in blind

¹ "Chief End of Revelation," 59.

fury, and stoned him to death. But when the angry ebullition had died away, the very mob was ashamed of what it had done in its delirium. The people willingly submitted to the decree of Honorius, which ended for ever those exhibitions—murder in the guise of sport—which for long had made holidays for the Romans. Gibbon says that the death of Telemachus was more useful than his life, although it is doubtful if Gibbon knew much, or anything at all, about the life of this monk. In a foot-note the historian adds, "No church has been dedicated, no altar has been erected to the only monk who died a martyr in the cause of humanity." But this is only Gibbon's sneering way. It was not the cause of humanity that Telemachus ever thought of serving. The motive which prompted his brave deed was not humanitarian, but divine. He was not the minister or the martyr of civilisation, but of religion. Ultimately, he did serve humanity nobly, just because, first of all, he so nobly served God.

The men in this world who serve God best are not those who are breathless with their vain repetitions of "Lord, Lord!" but those who end wrongs, who lessen the sum of the world's suffering, who ease in any slight degree the world's distressing burden of ignorance and shame. When a man prays this petition, "Hallowed be Thy name," he must not only cleanse his own life from every mean and unlovely thing, but he must work, he must suffer weariness and heartache, nay, he must be ready, like brave old Telemachus, to face the bitterness of death itself, so that this earth may be at last a place where God's name is hallowed, a place where day by day it grows an easier thing to believe in God and a more popular thing to serve Him.

Hallowed be Thy name! In this petition we pray that God would "prevent and remove atheism, ignorance, idolatry, profaneness and whatsoever is dishonourable to Him." It will be the day of all days when God's name is all-hallowed in this earth. It will be a day when no child will be born to tears and shame, when no sufferer will be left to a lonely agony, when no sinner will stand hopeless outside the pale of God's love.

¹ "Larger Catechism," question, 190.

CHAPTER IV.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

Matt. 6, 10. Thy Kingdom come.

I. THE NEW STYLE IN THEOLOGY.

Two things are very conspicuous in the recent history of theology. In the first place, the purely doctrinal treatment of the faith has largely fallen out of favour and well-nigh disappeared. Instead of the old style of dogmatic, with its hackneyed categories and terminology, with its placid practice of treating the book of Chronicles as of equal authority with the gospel of Mark, we have now what is called the "historical" investigation and presentation of our religion. The difference between the old style in theology and the new may be put in the words of Prin. Fairbairn: "The former is primarily doctrinal and secondarily historical, but the latter is primarily historical and secondarily doctrinal."¹

The cry "Back to Christ" has been raised, and it has been caught up and kept up now for many decades all over Christendom.² One not very pleasant result of this catchword movement is that some people now are finding a sort of occupation in pitting the Christ of the creeds against the Jesus of the gospels. We have actually had a Hibbert Journal Supplement, entitled "Jesus or Christ,"³ and we have seen books published whose very titles—*e.g.*, "The Historical Jesus and the Theological Christ"—seem to suggest that we shall know Jesus only by the obliteration of every scrap of the literature which He inspired and every fact of the history which His Spirit has guided. Weinelt, one of the latest authors to publish a volume on the theology of the New Testament, begins the second great section of

¹ "Christ in Modern Theology," 3.

² See Paterson, "Rule of Faith," 157, ff.

³ For the year 1909. Cf. Beyschlag, "N. T. Theology," E. T., I, 27. Denney, "Jesus and the Gospel," *passim*, and "The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation," 126.

his book,¹ the section which deals with primitive Christianity immediately after the gospel days, by saying that the religion of Jesus did not survive in its original form; rather it changed immediately and completely after His death and became "Christianity in the narrower sense of the word." Wernle, a more pushful representative of the same school, provides us with the dashing statement that "the Christian dogma, with its doctrinal revelation, is the pure caricature of the gospel."²

Now, while this movement back to Christ is in many ways praiseworthy, and while it is plain that the movement has added both interest and profit to the study of theology, it is surely regrettable that it should have drawn suspicion on itself by creating such an antithesis as that between the historical Jesus, in the gospels, and the dogmatic Christ, in the creeds. It is a little bewildering that this style of reasoning, which is clearly meant, if not to magnify "Jesus," at least to minimise "Christ," should be so enthusiastically followed by the disciples of a school whose watchword and rallying-cry is evolution. One used to think that it was fundamental in the theory of development that there could be nothing patent in the result which was not latent in the cause, and that it was the end that explained the beginning and not the beginning that explained the end. Our patience seems to be abused and our credulity overstrained when we are asked to believe that "the investigation of the figure of the historical Jesus must in the interest of truth remain open, but the construction of the history of Christianity is independent of it."³ If the history of Christianity is a *continuous* development, then the historical Jesus must be important, and the theological Christ must be equally important—the relation between them is as intimate as that of parent and child. But if the history of Christianity is not continuous, if it is only a tangled skein of broken threads, then the sooner men stop writing and reading about it the better. On the supposition that the construction of the history of Christianity has nothing to do with the historical Jesus, every reasonable hope that we might be able one day to describe in a scien-

¹ p. 231, ff.

² "Anfänge unser. Relig.," 61.

³ Sell, "Christentum und Weltgeschichte," I, 30.

tific way the history of our faith from start to finish is gone as irrecoverably as the shape of last year's clouds.

It is only gradually that we are coming to know how very wonderful has been the history of Christianity. More and more we feel ourselves compelled to demand that at the very inception of the movement there should be a Cause, a Personality, adequate to produce the stupendous result.

II. THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

But, in the second place, we have to notice not only that the centre of interest has been pushed back from the creeds and "the body of divinity" to the life and the words of the Man of Nazareth, but also we have to observe, with considerable regrets, that there has come no access of certainty in matters of faith from this transference of interest and this change of method. Rather we note, with pain, that both the number and the difficulty of the problems have been increased. It is all very well for the professional theologians to flee pell-mell from the councils and the fathers of the church, and even from the apostles, and to betake themselves to the Jesus who lives in the synoptics. But if we discover that whole passages in these gospels, especially in the gospel of Matthew, are held by these same judges to be spurious, if we are assured by these very same modern doomsters that Jesus was anything but a theologian, that He had no rounded doctrine about God or the nature of evil, our resort to Him does not seem to promise us much comfort. We are reduced to the plight of men driven out of one refuge to find that their new shelter has no roof and its walls are tottering.

Take one point. We are confronted with the immense initial difficulty that we are in doubt as to what Jesus was aiming at, what was His programme. Was His message the "gospel of the better righteousness," as we find it in the Sermon on the Mount? Was it the "gospel of the poor," as we might conclude from the address, given by Luke, in the synagogue at Capernaum? Or was it the "gospel of the kingdom," as we find it indicated at the beginning of the gospel of Mark (1. 5)? Probably we may accept the assurance of such a scholar as

the late H. J. Holtzmann, that there is no incongruity between these three views, and that the first two views are easily translated into the language of the third.¹ Harnack, in a well-known popular work,² distinguished three circles in the teaching of our Lord, the Gospel of the Kingdom, the Gospel of the Father, and the Better Righteousness, and he maintained that "each circle is so constructed that it contains the whole teaching, and in each, therefore, the whole doctrine can be perfectly represented."

We may say, then, that the Kingdom of God was the 'leit-motif' of Jesus, the centre of all His interest, the key-word of His whole teaching. We may say that He knew that He was sent into the world to create a moral and spiritual revival among the people of Israel so that the Kingdom of God promised of old to ancient Israel might at last appear. We may add other statements, for instance, that Jesus dealt with the idea of the Kingdom of God as one which was current in the daily speech of the people, which was so inwoven with Jewish thought and aspiration that it no more needed definition and commendation than the benefit of air and food.

But we are really making only a specious progress with statements of this sort. If we think that we are making progress to a surer knowledge of what our Lord worked for, then our progress is delusive, as if things on both sides of us were running back, rather than we ourselves running forward. If it was this "kingdom" round which all our Lord's words and hopes turned, yet we can find nothing like unanimity among the authorities when we begin to ask what exactly the "Kingdom of God" is. "Whether this Kingdom is to be erected on the earth, perhaps in the Promised Land, so that Rome would need to yield her sceptre to Israel, or whether it is to be a kingdom in the world to come; whether God will exercise sway by a human viceroy (Messias), or by heavenly representatives, or personally, a Spirit among spirits; whether this kingdom is something definitive or something merely provisional, and, accordingly, whether the resurrection and the last judgment are to occur before the inauguration of the kingdom, or to follow later—upon such fundamental questions there

¹ "N. T. Theol.," I, 188.

² "Das Wesen des Christentums," 33.

exists the extremest diversity of opinions."¹

If we turn up almost any of the recent books on the Biblical Theology of the New Testament we shall find there the noise of battle as waged between the ethical and the eschatological interpretation of the Kingdom of God. If there were any sense or edification in piling up names of home and foreign authorities, or, to speak more safely, authors, it would be quite easy to make an imposing array of names on the one side of the quarrel and to offset it with as pompous an array of names on the other. We might even oppose one great section of Christendom to another, for while the Western Church has mostly used the present petition in an eschatological sense, the Greek Church has made it a missionary petition. But the process of 'counting noses' settles nothing. To vote with the crowd is to deem clamour conclusive. To vote against the crowd, because crowds are all multitudinously in the wrong, is mere foppery.

The state of affairs may be bewildering and disheartening to the ordinary man. But, however hard and unpromising the search threatens to be, we must attempt, as far as our means go, to find out for ourselves what this "Kingdom of God" was, for which Jesus taught us to pray.

(a) The Democratic-Movement Theory.

It is well to begin at the very outside limit to which denial and ingenious conjecture can go. Behind all the scholars who are debating what it was that Jesus may have aimed at, there are others who are agitating something far more radical. It is hardly proper to ask, "What was it that Jesus lived for?" till we have settled with those who are asking, "Did Jesus ever live at all?" We need not be afraid of this latter question, and we need not toss it from us as gratuitous impudence. There is a certain school, perhaps not very formidable either in numbers or weight, which has struggled to interpret the history of the individual Jesus in terms of the history of a corporation, the church. One of this school's representatives, Kalthoff, says,¹ "We

¹ Jülicher in the "Geschichte des Christentums," Kultur der Gegenwart series, 53. See Bruce, "Kingdom of God," 46, and Wernle, "Anfänge," 34.

¹ "Das Christusproblem," 60.

must regard growing Christianity as a social movement on a grand, nay, on the grandest scale, to which an elementary development of power in an upward-struggling class of oppressed men gave the impulse, and which in its further course suffered so great a historical metamorphosis that its result in the Catholic Church appears as the direct opposite of its beginning, while yet . . . the original driving forces appear unmistakable to him who looks deep down into the affair." That is to say, the autocratic Church was the child of an enormous, anonymous, social upheaval, which has not left a scrap of a trace of itself in secular history—and the gospel history is the story, in a sort of a charade, of this diverted and perverted social movement.

Old Testament criticism has long accustomed us to the idea that the histories of certain individuals are really the masked histories of tribes. The particular school of New Testament critics which we have now under review declares that the gospels are genuine enough history, only they are the history of the growing Catholic Church, not the history of an individual called Jesus. The gospels are not biography—they are the chronicle of an epoch and a movement.

Of course, if Jesus is not a historical individual, neither is Peter.¹ Peter is "unmistakably the personification of the Roman Church and its wide-reaching and centralising tendencies."² Judas, again, is the personification of the guild of delators. Our author has looked so long upon this odd conceit of his that, like a blazing sun, it has branded itself upon his eye, and, look where he may, he can see nothing but the one same thing. The divinity of Jesus, the sacraments of the church, the resurrection stories, the geographical background of the gospel stories (which is declared to be Italian and not Palestinian)—everything is coaxed or compelled into conformity with the theory. In a word, the "Kingdom of God" represents not an idea in the mind of a single person. It represents the great, growing social movement which, working upward on prophetic and democratic lines from the lowest strata of the servile world, became visualised at last in the Catholic Church, an aristocratic institution which is the flat contradiction of every-

¹ Ibid, 50.

² Ibid, 78.

thing that the movement primarily aimed at.

The attempt to offer any serious or sustained criticism of such speculations as are represented by Kalthoff must inevitably produce a suspicion of frivolity. If there ever was any such movement in the underworld of Rome's slaves it is a very striking thing that we should have no clear account of it. It is a pity that any theory should reduce the gospels to a string of euphemisms, or make them extravaganzas whose meaning or no-meaning is as hard to find as the key to "The Shaving of Shagpat." If a person can doubt the historicity of Jesus, who, we do not forget, never wrote a line Himself, yet surely no person but a hardened crank can doubt the historicity of Paul, so long, at least, as we have the epistles to the Romans and the Corinthians and the Galatians in our hands. The earliest writings of Paul take us back easily within a generation of the death of Jesus. This one fact is decisive. It leaves the theories of Kalthoff hanging hopelessly in the air. We might have the inclination and the ingenuity to attempt to reduce the gospels to the historical level of "Gulliver's Travels," but we ought to remember that there is no cranny or corner in the whole awake experience of men where either "Gulliver's Travels" or the servile movement of Kalthoff could ever have been historic facts.

(b) The Apocalyptic Theory.

We come now to speak of a school of interpretation whose latest and most popular exponent is, perhaps, Dr. Albert Schweitzer. His book, "Von Reimarus zu Wrede," has been translated into English under the title of "The Quest of the Historical Jesus." In this book he reviews with astonishing learning and unwearying interest the whole long endeavour to write the "Life" of Jesus. But although the principles that animate all the criticisms in Schweitzer's book lie on the very surface of it, it will perhaps suit our present purpose better if we refer to a smaller book by the same author, "Das Messianitäts- und Leidensgeheimnis."

Schweitzer begins with a destructive criticism of the four pillar-propositions on which the "modern-historical" attempt at interpreting the life of Jesus rests. Every one of this quartet is given a quick dispatch. There was no happy Galilee 'springtime' in the life of Jesus. Pauline

influences in no way touched the old synoptic expressions regarding Jesus' sufferings. It was not the ethical but the supra-ethical, eschatological conception of the kingdom which dominated Jesus' representation of the sufferings. The idea of the sufferings was not published in any ethical deliverance—the whole matter concerned an incomprehensible secret which the disciples did not need to understand.¹

Having swept aside these four propositions, our author proceeds further with the work of clearing the ground. Attempts had been made, by Colani and Volkmar, to eliminate the eschatological element from the record of Jesus' activities and to leave the ethical in undisputed occupation. Erich Haupt, again, had tried to spiritualise the eschatology, making Jesus use in His own sense the terminology which His contemporaries used in another sense. Others, again, had made the beginnings of Jesus' ministry purely ethical. These supposed that, to begin with, He expected that the Kingdom would come through the extension and perfecting of the ethical community. Then when ominous opposition arose, and the fortunes of the Kingdom grew more and more precarious, the eschatological idea, it was maintained, was forced upon the mind and the programme of Jesus. Schweitzer notices and gathers up these theories only that he may fling them all overboard. The life of Jesus must not be a patchwork, but a harmony and a whole. If certain writers have attempted to give homogeneity to the life of Jesus by eliminating the eschatological element, Schweitzer is very sure that the only homogeneity worth having is to be obtained by running the eschatological idea right through His life from end to end. "The eschatological cannot have been forced upon Jesus by outward circumstances, but from the very beginning, even in the days of the Galilean period, it must have been at the basis of His teaching."¹

The Missionary Commission (Matt. 10, 7) is eschatological, not ethical. The air is pulsing with urgency. Behind the thinnest veil stupendous events are crowding forward into men's view. The disciples will not have gone over all the cities of Israel with their sharp summons to repentance before the grand event is upon them (Matt. 10,

¹ Cf. Tyrrell, "Christianity at the Cross-Roads," chapp. VII. and VIII.

¹ Op. Cit., 15.

28). The ethic which Jesus, and His disciples after Him, demanded was not our "unconditioned" morality. He asked for a "interim" ethic, that is an ethic conditioned in the sense that it stands in indissoluble connection with the expectation of a perfect state which is to come supernaturally. The Kingdom of God lies beyond the limits of good and evil. It will be brought about by a cosmic catastrophe in which the evil will be utterly overwhelmed. Therewith all ethical standards are abrogated. The Kingdom of God is a supra-ethical affair.

This is the 'secret' or 'mystery' of the Kingdom of God. It is a mystery which the disciples themselves and the evangelists after them never understood. This Kingdom of God, which is "the synthesis of a sovereign spirit between the prophetic morals and the apocalyptic of Daniel" and which is to annul all ethical distinctions by a sort of divine *tour de force*, is not an affair growing from less to more. We are wrong if we suppose that the parables—for instance, the Sower, the Seed Growing Secretly, the Mustard Seed and the Leaven—represent a development from little to great. These parables are 'mysteries.' They show us two conditions following each other, whose connection is as certain as it is inexplicable. As on the sowing the harvest follows, although no one can say how they are inwardly connected, so on the preaching of Jesus the Kingdom of God will surely come. The great text in Matthew (11, 15), "Since the days of John the Baptist the Kingdom of God suffereth violence and the violent take it by force," does not mean that eager persons are thrusting their way into the Kingdom, but that repentance and moral renewal are the pressure that is being employed to accelerate the advent of the Kingdom.

When now we come to the second part of the life of our Lord there we find another 'mystery,' a riddle which was as dark to the disciples as the riddle of the Kingdom itself.¹ This is the 'mystery' of the sufferings of Jesus. "The mystery of the sufferings takes up and develops the mystery of the Kingdom of God." Here, we are told, we have the true relation between the ethical and the eschatological in the life of Jesus. First of all, the moral renewal which the early preaching of Jesus demanded exerts a compelling

¹ Op. Cit., 27.

force on the incoming of the Kingdom. Secondly, there is added to this accelerating pressure a new force in the death of Jesus. The power which He exercises in this direction is the highest conceivable—He surrenders His life.

The Messiahship, we are not now surprised to learn, is another of the 'mysteries' in which the life of Jesus moves. At His baptism He awoke to Messianic consciousness, but this He did not disclose till the days of Cæsarea Philippi. All the passages, therefore, in Matthew's gospel, earlier than the days of Cæsarea Philippi, where Jesus is described as "Son of David," have to be branded as *Sondergut*, as peculiar to Matthew, an offence for which they must suffer expulsion from the gospel altogether. (Matt. 9, 27-31; 12, 23; 14, 31; 15, 22). The Demoniac's confession that Jesus is the Son of God, for all that it is no *Sondergut* of Matthew, but an early statement in the gospel of Mark (1, 11), has also to be extruded remorselessly. "Son of Man," as used by Jesus to describe Himself was impossible before the days of Cæsarea Philippi, and so another long line of texts is led forth to banishment—Mark 2, 10; 2, 28; Matt. 8, 20; 11, 19; 12, 32; 12, 40; 13, 37; 13, 41. "Jesus was a Messiah who during His public ministry would not be, and did not need to be Messiah in order to fulfil His mission." The Kingdom of God was futurist, and so was its Messiah.¹ The triumphal entry was not an ovation given to one who was looked upon as the Messiah, but to one who was regarded as the forerunner of the Messiah. The cry of the blind man at Jericho (Matt. 20, 30; Luke 18, 38) was not intended for Jesus and not meant to proclaim that He was Messiah. The secret of Jesus was that when the Kingdom of God did come, *then* He would be the Messiah. The people could know, and needed to know nothing about this secret. All they were asked to do was to believe that the Kingdom of God was at hand.

We are to understand, then, that this supra-ethical, catastrophic, imminent revolution was what Jesus meant when He spoke of the Kingdom of God. His idea, at the first, was that it had to be preceded by a time of great suffering for all, but, later, Jesus came to think that He alone must suffer and die. Penance and preaching did not avail to precipitate the Kingdom of God, as Jesus had anticipated.

¹ Op. Cit., 33.

He was driven, therefore, to adopt the view that He alone must suffer and perish. So the 'secret' of the Kingdom passed into the 'secret' of the sufferings.¹

Jesus took His secret down to the grave with Him. The Kingdom of God, as Jesus had pictured it to Himself, did not come. Paul and the apostles groped about in a helpless sort of a way trying to find out some explanation of the death of Jesus. They stumbled upon the theory that He died because He was the Messiah, whereas the true explanation, according to our author, is that He died in order that He might be the Messiah. The eschatology of the Church all down the ages was a dechristianised eschatology. It lacked moral dynamic. It was mere waiting. The Messiah, who was never Messiah on earth, was the end of all Messianic expectations. The philosophy on which Jesus lived was eschatological, but the Christian philosophy which His death inaugurated carried men away for ever from eschatology. "This is the great 'secret' in the Christian economy of salvation."

Is it necessary now to say very much in criticism of the views presented so eloquently and so confidently by Schweitzer? Is not the whole scheme over-subtle, too much like the *tour de force* of some ambitious and laborious privat-dozent? Schweitzer condemns the extremists who would throw eschatology out of the gospel altogether. He himself is in danger of being condemned for an extremist who would make the gospel nothing but eschatology. The ordinary intelligence cannot believe that the morality of the Sermon on the Mount has the eschatological background and conditioning which Schweitzer demands. The ordinary intelligence is goaded to protest by a theory which attributes to Jesus so many secrets and mysteries. We cannot throw even the small change of our approbation to a scheme of interpretation which hits off the disciples as loutish persons, mere walking figures in a drama which they never understood. Is there not something humorous in the conceit of an author who claims that the very evangelists did not understand the 'secret,' or 'secrets' of Jesus, but that he, the critic, has had the acumen to pierce right down to the heart of the mystery, and bring it forth to the light of day, by the help of the documents which these same pur-

¹ Cf. Oman, "Church and the Divine Order," 40, ff.

blind evangelists left behind them?

It is written all over the gospels, in characters so large that blindness itself can scarcely miss it, that Jesus conceived the Kingdom as one whose laws are righteousness and meekness, purity of heart and a childlike spirit. There is not a bit of good in befogging ourselves with the idea of an "interim" ethic—the gospel landscape itself is quite clear of that sort of fog. The Kingdom of God is the Kingdom of the Beatitudes. Little wonder, then, that people should ask, "How could such a Kingdom be introduced by a mere fiat?"¹

But the quite fatal weakness of this eschatological view is that it degrades Jesus to the level of a poor visionary, little better than those half-mad enthusiasts whose balance was upset by chiliastic visions, whose delirious dreams destroyed alike the dreamers and the dupes who followed them. The eschatological ideas which Schweitzer wants to make the whole mental and spiritual outfit of our Lord had nothing in them. There was no more truth behind them than there was in the maunderings of "prophets" and gipsies, who in our own times have scared the wits out of simple people by definite dates for the end of the world. There was "that Egyptian" (Acts 23, 38), who cheered on his following with the pleasant promise that when he led them to the Mount of Olives the walls of Jerusalem would fall down flat before them. Of course, nothing happened at Jerusalem, but a fresh massacre of Jewish fanatics on Roman swords. Jesus, on Schweitzer's view, would be another such, at once dupe and deceiver. He thought that His death was about to end the old order with the abruptness of annihilation, and to startle a new world into being wherein He Himself would be Messiah. He died for this pathetic delusion, and nothing happened, not even the disappointment of Jesus, for, of course, His cold corpse in the garden-tomb could never know how utterly the irony of events had frustrated all His hopes.

Saner critics, like Weinell,¹ will readily admit that Jesus not only knew the hopes of the apocalyptists, but also that He to some extent sympathised with their aspirations. Yet if we study the genuine article, as we can find it in the Apocalypse of St. John, with its numbers and times and

¹ Oman, *op. cit.* 41. Cf. Heinrici, "Das Urchristentum," 8.

symbols, with its crude nationalism and its bizarre details regarding the future, if we remember the very significant fact that Jesus describes salvation as *come*, not *to come*, then we may declare with some confidence that Jesus lacked those traits that are essential to the true apocalyptic.

It is plain, to any lengthened reflection, that there are two ways of describing eschatology. In the first place, it is a practicable and an attractive task to soften and forget the bizarre, nationalistic, catastrophic elements in the eschatology and to read the whole apocalyptic in terms of ethics. All serious ethics must be hopeful, must be bound to the belief that the good which *ought* to triumph *must* ultimately prevail. And we may maintain that this is just the same as saying that all strenuous ethics must be eschatological. But, in the second place, there is a type of interpretation which screws up higher and higher the *differentia* of eschatology—its juggling with mystic numbers and symbols, its certainty of an imminent catastrophe which will call the celestial Thumaturge from his remote indifference and display Him smashing into the present order, its *Schadenfreude* which sees masses and masses of creatures swept to hopeless doom and a small coterie of smug Chauvinists wafted to an endless bliss. We cannot possibly have any sympathy with this type of thing, and we believe that Jesus himself had little or nothing to do with it. If we are forbidden to read the apocalyptic in the first of these two senses, and so maintain the supremacy of the ethical all the way through, there seems to remain nothing but an act of drastic surgery which will excise the eschatology altogether.

(c) The Ethical Theory.

The theories of the Kingdom which we have been considering are monuments of ingenuity, and, we can hardly help adding, of futility. To the individual who has no "fixed idea," who has no wish to torment the documents into conformity with any preconceived scheme, the ethical character of the teaching of Jesus is plain and natural. A distinguished Frenchman, Loisy,² has drawn attention to

¹ "N. T. Theol.," 125, ff.

² "The Gospel and the Church," 54.

the fact that in the gospel the national element has disappeared, that his nationality no longer entitles the Jew to the Kingdom, that the eschatological element no longer fills the view, and that the religious and moral elements have been brought forward into the near foreground. Not only that, but it has been a matter of common observation that earlier in the gospel-history than the ministry of Jesus, in the days of the Baptist's public activity, the Messianic proclamation had been delivered in purely ethical form, in a message which for the first time was completely divorced from political expectations. It is a great comfort to know that the ethical view of the Kingdom which so directly commends itself to the plain man is championed by a great army of eminent scholars in this country and abroad. We may be perplexed by the question of what is to be done with the eschatological element in the gospel. No doubt, that is, and will remain, a difficult question for the theologians. It has been suggested by Prof. Cairns² that the apocalyptic passages and the ethical passages are a whole, that in the former we have the teaching of Jesus with regard to social and national interests, just as in the latter we have His guidance for the individual. Or again, it is just possible that a great deal of the apocalyptic element will require to be counted as nothing more than the fevered visions of the early Church read backward into the discourses of Jesus Himself. These matters are all under discussion, and there will not be any generally accepted solution for a little while yet. But, no matter what may be the final conclusion regarding the apocalyptic element in the gospels, nothing can ever disturb our confidence that the ethical is the constitutive factor in the idea of the Kingdom of God which was proclaimed by Jesus.

The Kingdom of God, according to the excellent definition of the late Prof. Candlish, is a "fellowship of men in which the highest morality is obeyed as the will of God and the highest blessedness enjoyed in communion with Him."¹

1. The Reign of God.

It would be too elementary to dwell long on the fact that

² "Christianity in the Modern World," Chap. IV.

¹ "Christian Doctrine of God," 13. Cf. Bruce, *Chief End of Revelation*, 76; "Apologetics," Bk. 2, Chap. 3; "Kingdom of God," 46.

Jesus proclaimed a Kingdom, that is, a "reign" of God. God is King *de jure* over all men, but they only are in the Kingdom who make Him Lord *de facto*. Not they whose loyalty begins and ends with brassy protestations, but they who do the will of God have the right of entry into the Kingdom. The Kingdom of God is a rule, not a theory about ruling. On our part, it is not a scheme to be discussed, but an oath to be sworn and an allegiance to be maintained.

2. The New Righteousness.

The Kingdom of God has a new righteousness. The Sermon on the Mount leaves no doubt that an enhanced morality is the badge, the very *sine qua non* of Jesus' Kingdom. So far is Jesus from crying down "mere morality," as has been the vogue with some, He actually demands "good works" as the very pith of that qualification without which no man has an interest in the Kingdom. (Matt. 5, 16).

It was inevitable that Jesus should assume the role of critic, and that He should arraign and condemn the pretentious righteousness of the Pharisees. "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and the Pharisees ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of heaven." (Matt. 5, 20). It was in the name of homage to this imperious righteousness that Jesus demanded the sacrifice of earth's dearest relationships. (Mark 3, 31-35; Matt. 12, 46-50; Luke 8, 19-21). It was the unfaltering loyalty of Jesus Himself to this better righteousness that provoked the conflict with the spiritual guides of Israel which brought Him at last to Golgotha. Jesus elaborated in some unforgettable passages the difference between the old law and the new. "Ye have heard that it hath been said to them of old . . . but I say unto you . . ." So, by way of making the idea of righteousness more inward, more exacting, more heroic, more noble, He revised the statute of murder (Matt. 5, 21-22), of chastity (Matt. 5, 27, ff.), of revenge (Matt. 5, 38-39), of friendship and enmity (Matt. 5, 43-44). The undivided energy of the citizens of the Kingdom is to be given not to appearing, but to being righteous. "Take heed that ye do not your righteousness before men to be seen of them: else ye have no reward with your Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 6, 1).

3. The New Piety.

The Kingdom has also a new piety, a new style of intercourse between God and man, and a new rubric for prayer. "Not any longer twice or three times in the day, as the Jewish usage prescribed, rises the prayer of God's sons to the heavenly tabernacle: an unbroken communion binds them all to the loving Father." This being so, we are not astonished to learn that, with the inauguration of the Kingdom, there has come a wondrous new joy into the intercourse which man has with God. John the Baptist was ever sounding the note of doom. His little company walked fearfully under a black cloud. The axe, the fire, the fan—John's sombre oratory dwelt constantly on the awful instruments which were ready to punish the prevailing iniquity. The circle that gathered round Jesus, on the other hand, was blithe as a bridal party. Jesus called his followers "the children of the bride-chamber." (Matt. 9, 15). They could not but feel a joy like the carolling freshness of the morning—they had passed into the Kingdom where the constant presence of God was the delight of men and the doing of His will their one honour and service. No longer do we hear rising the bewildered cries of the psalmists. No longer is the heart of man torn with the anxious alternation of hope and fear—"How long, O Lord, wilt Thou hide Thyself for ever?" (Ps. 69, 48). Now the children of God live gladly and loyally. He is their Father and their King, and the usage of His court is that they who ask receive, that they who seek find, that they who knock see the door of the divine mercy swing open to them. (Matt. 7, 7).

4. Conditions of Entry.

We need not tarry to notice that the two great characteristics of the Kingdom are its spirituality, and its universality. Nor need we linger long to note that the two enemies of the Kingdom are Mammon and Care. A very startling combination surely—sleek, comfortable Mammon, and haggard, dark-browed Care!¹ The parables, especially the striking group in the thirteenth chapter of Matthew's gospel, show us that the Kingdom finds resistance and obstacles everywhere, in the machinations of the Prince of

¹ P. W. Schmidt, "Die Gesch. Jesu," Volksgausg., 91.

Darkness, in the sinister practices of evil-lovers and evil-doers, in the very nature of the heart itself. But though the Kingdom have to struggle against all this organised resistance, although its beginnings be untrumpeted and even mean, yet it comes into its own. Its work is done with the secrecy, the silence and the success of leaven and sunshine.

We do not enlarge upon these points, for we know that the thing which ought to concern us most of all is the question of the conditions of entry into this Kingdom. It would be shameful and heartless if we sang rapturous anthems about the glories of Zion, the city of God, if we dilated in gleaming words and haunting phrases on its streets of gold and its palaces of ivory, if we celebrated the honour and the happiness of its habitants, and yet kept silence about the gateways by which men may enter. The conditions are very easy, and very strict. They are Repentance and Faith. Surely it is a great thing for this world of ours that the conditions are what they are, that they are such that any man, no matter what may have been his history or his culture, can comply with them.

There must be *faith*, faith in the power and the love of that God who is the Father of all men. "And the apostles said, Lord, increase our faith. And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye would say to this sycamine tree, Be thou rooted up and be thou planted in the sea, and it would have obeyed you." (Luke 17, 5-6).

And *repentance*! The very first demand that Jesus made in His preaching was for Repentance. He began His ministry in Galilee proclaiming, "The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand; Repent ye and believe in the Gospel." (Mark I, 14-15). "Repent," and "Believe"—and "Repent" is the first! It is this word "Repent," this demand for a new mind and a new life, for the abandonment of the worthless, specious things and the choice of the real, precious things, for the denial of self and the service of God in the service of the hungry, the sinful and the outcast, that makes the entry to the Kingdom a strait gate to many, and a shut gate to more. If Jesus had demanded that, as a condition of entry, men should bear physical distress, wear hair shirts that fret the skin into one great sore, stand in the dead of winter up to the lips in ice-cold water, climb painfully on bare knees up some holy stairway, torment and tear

the flesh with many stripes from a hissing thong, men would gladly have done all that, and more than that. But what men find it very hard to do is to abandon the old mind, to give up the old life, to repent. Yet he who wishes to enter into the new fellowship, which is the Kingdom of God, must knock at its gateway with two hands, one of faith and the other of repentance, and, to the suppliant who comes with this title and approach, the doors of the Kingdom will swing wide as on musical hinges, and he will receive welcome and investiture from the King.

III. THE COMING OF THE KINGDOM.

Men have been using the petition, "Thy Kingdom come," for nearly two thousand years now, and as the old Jews who cherished apocalyptic hopes were wont to scan all quarters of the political and religious heavens for signs of the coming of the world of their expectations, so, naturally, at the present day, we, who believe in and pray for the ethical and spiritual Kingdom which Jesus proclaimed, ask if there be any sign that it is coming, or come.

Apparently, it is not a very difficult thing, and not a very uncommon thing to paint the picture of the world's history so as to show that things have been going steadily from bad to worse, the downflow of things never slacking, far less turning. It is quite easy to catch the trick of those who find good sport in satirical sketches of the nations that by appointed and well-paid officials keep on crying to God, "Thy Kingdom come," and all the while keep on arming themselves with more and more formidable weapons of war, busy, with the briefest interludes for unmeaning prayers, in the devilish work of mixing fresh gunpowder, this year's mixture being always less noisy, less smoky and more deadly than last year's, and all this in preparation for the carefully calculated time when it will be a profitable business to murder and plunder men of other nations, who also are praying to God for the coming of His Kingdom!

It is also easy to point out what a farce it is for men to worship with unction in church on Sunday, and then to go out on Monday that they may make bloated fortunes out of the ignorance, the need, or the shame of their fellow-men. At the least, it is not difficult to sketch impressively the

incongruity of praying, "Thy Kingdom come," and rising from our knees to live lapped in all ease, cynical or forgetful of the hungry, the naked, the homeless, of the children who have been so damned into the world that they have never had a chance of knowing childhood's innocence, of the men and the women from whose characters every trace of the divine image has long ago been obliterated.

All such pictures, while they reflect the great cleverness of their creators, labour usually under one very serious defect—they are out of all touch with facts. They are the nightmare of ignorance, or they are the distorted vision of those whose eyes are diseased with unreason and prejudice. If, in answer to the prayer of nineteen centuries, the Kingdom of God is not here and now realised, yet, putting it at the very lowest, candour must confess that the conditions for the perfect coming of the divine Kingdom have been growing more and more favourable. The outlook is bright. The cloud has not merely a silver lining—the glory is steadily overflowing and transfiguring the mass which a little while ago was so black. The most cursory review of the history of Christianity and the present world-situation will serve to show that this optimistic temper is justified. "Jesus had a Kingdom, and the course of the centuries displays its coming."¹

To begin with the business of War, the grim world-madness upon which the emphasis of the agonised years has been laid. Warfare, we may say, not, in spite of, but because of the ghastly events of recent days, is more and more being recognised as repugnant to faith and to common sense, as not only anti-Christian, but, what will perhaps more appeal to the ordinary world, as absurd. Every day it is growing less hazardous to prophesy that war must soon be as obsolete as the ordeal by fire—the alliance of religion and logic which doomed the fire-ordeal must likewise doom the kindred silliness of arbitrament by the sword. The dynasts of the world are hopeless, blinded by servile flattery and stiff with pride. But subjects are becoming wise, and, a very small stage further on, war will be a game that kings will not be allowed to play at. Nay, out of the ill comes the good. The very way in which Germany, with her

¹ H. J. Holtzmann, "Akademische Predigten," 2.

machine-like mind and her remorseless *Gründlichkeit*, organised war and made it her national industry, has been the mightiest preparative for the coming of the final peace. Germany gave her last son and her last pfennig to the grim Moloch. The calamity when it came was appalling in its extent and in its shame. The mad logic of Germany in exploiting the policy of violence has brought one good result, for it has showed the most unbelieving what war involves. Now that the world has seen what a war of aggression is, the world wants to see it no more.

Slavery is doomed. A few unprogressive peoples still hunt and trade in slaves.¹ But the sleepless police of civilisation patrol the world's highways, and the slave-trade, with its nauseating horrors, will soon have reached the limbo of those shameful things which we know only as weird histories from a lost world.

The fog of Ignorance which so long darkened and distressed our world is thinning away before the dawn of a new day. Ignorance is no longer the badge of contumely worn by our great populations. Culture is less and less the perquisite of leisure and high birth. Perhaps it would be uncharitable to say that any branch of the Christian Church loves and cherishes the darkness. But the children of the Reformation, at any rate, have been taught to love the light and to pray for the coming of a clearer day. The day of ignorant men and ignorant churches is rapidly passing away—God hurry it to an early night! The day of world-wide knowledge and culture is dawning—God speed it to its unpassing noon!

The Social Distress of our great cities is now to us all like the pain of fire in our very bones. It shocks us that this state of things has been winked at so long. It saddens us that it ever was allowed to grow up at all. "Only the loveless man, the isolated, the self-sufficient, the irresponsible, that is, the inhuman man, has an easy conscience. The feeling of guilt is inescapable for the true man."² But, now that we have begun to feel the shame of our social conditions, now that we have begun to do something for their remedy, we must not give way to impatience and irrational impulse. Rome was not built in a day—we are so

¹ Cf. Norman Maclean's "Transformation of Africa," ch. II.

² Dr. Werner Picht, "Das Problem der Settlementbewegung," 10.

apt to forget this trite and wise saw. Society's sickness came very gradually, and the convalescence will be long and tedious. The social problems will not be solved till all men, and not merely a few reforming enthusiasts, have felt the poignant soreness and the needless shame of our social misery. In 1865, Alexander Smith said that the Cowgate, one of the worst slums in Edinburgh, or any other city, never came to the upper streets. "You may walk," said he, "for a twelvemonth about the New Town before any of the Cowgate pariahs come between the wind and your gentility."¹ Then the misery was buried, packed down beneath stone flags, forgotten. Now the Cowgate and every other mean street, where the body cannot be healthy or the mind clean, come stalking into our drawing-rooms, pitifully asking for attention and justice. Better still, our drawing-rooms are wisely concerned about the Cowgate. Delicately nurtured women and men of culture and leisure are insisting and labouring that the decency and happiness of homes in the West End may be possible for women and children in the Cowgate—and *that* is surely the coming of the Kingdom of God.

Further, and in this I desire to speak with deliberation, I say that the gospel was never before proclaimed at home and abroad with so much enthusiasm, with so much winsomeness, and, I shall add, with so much success. The old accent and terminology may be gone, to the grief of some, but the gospel of Galilee was never so well understood as now, never so gratefully accepted, never so faithfully proclaimed, and the Kingdom of God was never happier in its servants since the heroic days of the apostles. If the church ever thought that salvation is a thing which concerns only that portion of a man's being called his "soul," and despises or neglects his body, then the church was flagrantly wrong. On the other hand, if there be social reformers who think that man's salvation is merely an affair of feeding and housing, of making the workshop into a pleasing dormitory or, at the worst, a playground, then these men also are hopelessly wrong. Undoubtedly it is all to the good that religion is no longer the business of the cloister, that serving God means no more a fussy solicitude about one's own

¹ "A Summer in Skye," 20.

"soul." God has driven men out of the pathetic frivolity of the monkish life, out into the streets and the markets, to share the common life, to serve Him in the service of the ignorant and the fallen and the sorrowing. We have learned—what a weary while the lesson has taken us!—that the only way in which a man can save his own soul is to care for the soul of his brother.

We pray, "Thy Kingdom come," according to Christ's appointment, and every sign indicates that God has heard and that He is answering our prayer.

Men must keep on praying for the Kingdom, for the "impetus of ascent" that will carry it up to its glory. Men must *work* for the Kingdom, work hard for it, because there is so much to do, and because the sands in the glass run out so quickly. We are but the King's advance guard. We break the way. The royal entry, the ovation, the banquet, when the King comes into His Kingdom, will be for others. No one of us shall see that hour of consummation. All that we shall be able to do will be to bring its coming a little nearer—alas that our little should be so very little! But if slowly, the Kingdom comes surely, and to all those who were in it and who gave it the devotion of their hearts and the toil of the long years the memory of their love and service will add a brighter glory to their heaven and a higher rapture to their anthem of praise.

IV. APOSTOLIC NEGLECT OF THE KINGDOM.

There is one last thing that needs a brief notice. The question has been asked again and again why Christ's category of the "Kingdom of God" disappears almost entirely when we pass beyond the world of the Synoptists. "The Gospel of Christ replaced the Gospel of the Kingdom because by His death He became the Kingdom, because He became all that the Kingdom contained, He was the 'truth' of the Kingdom, and His personal perfecting was *ipso facto* and *pari passu* the securing of the Kingdom. *To us Christ Himself is the Kingdom.*"¹ This is what gives a new and a mightier motive to the work which we do for Him in His Kingdom. By the greatest good fortune, we are not

¹ Forsyth, "Person and Place of Jesus Christ," 122.

doomed to anything so distressing as toiling for some impersonal corporation. We serve no abstract idea. In the Kingdom of God we are enlisted in the service of a Person, of One who has purchased our homage by the greatness of His sacrifice for us, of One who merits from each of us, if that were possible, a love as big as the summed-up devotion of all those who ever followed Him below and now adore Him in heaven.

CHAPTER V.

THE WILL OF GOD AND THE NEW EARTH.

Matt. 6, 10. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.

I. THE DIVINE WILL AND THE NEW EARTH.

"All things are double, one against another," says the Son of Sirach (XLIII., 24). Experience never makes us acquainted with a happy fact but there is forced upon our attention some complementary fact of bitterness, a something painful in contrast to the former merriment, tearful in contrast to the former song. Most of our knowledge comes to us in this way, by twin-facts, day and night, laughter and moan, plenty and want, life and death. But the human heart protests against the dark element in our dual experience. Logic may be able to prove that in such polar experiences one term is unmeaning without the other, but still the heart of man, in despite of logic, makes its protest with the constancy and the assurance of an instinct. We are dissatisfied and pained till the element of shadow has been taken away. Nothing will content us but day without night, laughter with no recoil to tears, banquet with no morrow of penury, life with no decline to imbecility and death.

Look at the world's races. Before our eyes they fall into a pair of contrasted classes, the savage and the civilised. But enlightened humanity can never accept this painful dichotomy. The contrast of barbarous and cultured is shameful, and it ought not to exist. It is the pain begotten of this division that has inspired our missionary movement. With rare ingenuity we have devised missions of all sorts, evangelical, educational, medical, industrial. We have financed these missions, and—which is a far greater thing to have done—we have given to their service the very flower of our manhood. It is this missionary sacrifice and daring which, in the face of the greed and luxury and violence of society, still keep us hopeful, which help to sustain in us the belief that man's alliance and destiny are with the angels and not with the beasts. We recognise that our

Christian culture has blessed and ennobled us. Take that from us and we would be flung back into the darkness of savagery. Add that one element to the world of barbarism, and it would become a world of peace and beauty and progress.

II. HEAVEN AND EARTH.

Now here, in this petition of our Lord's Prayer, our attention is directed to another pair of contrasted terms, to the opposition suggested in the words 'heaven' and 'earth.' We are here, evidently, ushered into the presence of the most massive subjects that can engage attention. Here we have a pair of contrasting immensities which between them exhaust the universe, the whole actual world, whose acquaintance has disappointed us, and the whole ideal world, for which our unsatisfied souls long.

The popular idea of heaven is that it is a happy place of never-fading day. Our nurture has bred in us the confidence that heaven is the place of all ultimate excellencies. For most of us heaven remains as our childhood's imagination painted it, a place whose streets are of gold and whose gates are of pearl. Its inhabitants are eminent for a purity and a happiness which, in our mortal eyes, have one supreme quality—they are lifted high above the threat of change. Our earth is a place of gloom, of a gloom which is but mocked by the transient promise of the morning. Earth is sinful, a place of tears. Earth is harassed with sore change—we never have time in this world to grow acquainted with the light and the joy till swift night snatches away our sunshine and lowers the shadow of melancholy on all our mirth.

But let us turn round now from the popular idea of heaven, and let us ask what was Christ's idea of it. We may notice the conjecture that Jesus conceived the Kingdom as already existing in ideal perfection in heaven, and this conjecture might carry us some way toward an explanation of the sequence of our Lord's petitions. This is the conjecture of Weinel.¹ Another distinguished New Testament scholar, H. J. Holtzmann, says that our present petition comes after the petition for the coming of the Kingdom because it is meant to be explanatory of how the Kingdom is to come.

¹ "N. T. Theol," 55.

And if the present petition is only an explanatory clause, that is the sufficient reason for its omission in the more condensed version of the Prayer which we find in Luke.¹

But we may now return from this interesting diversion. We come back to deal with our Lord's idea of heaven. We have to notice that, not only in calling God "The Father in Heaven," (Matt. 11, 25), but also in His great thanksgiving, "I thank Thee, Father, lord of heaven and earth," (Matt. 11, 25), Christ recognised that the universe is divided into two different spheres or states, heaven and earth. The baptism of John, Jesus urged, was from heaven, that is to say, John's ministry was inaugurated by God and inspired with a divine purpose. The prodigal son acknowledged that he had sinned against Heaven (Luke 15, 18), that is, not merely against an earthly father and against secular standards of decency, but against something higher, against a dearer love and a wiser rule. A passing reference to the words of Isaiah—"Heaven is His throne and earth His footstool," (Mark 5, 35)—shows that our Lord regarded heaven as being the place where God's majesty is displayed in its transcendence, and earth as a place still under the sway of God but blessed with less imposing tokens of His glorious presence. So we may say, from this very cursory review of the texts, that our Lord regarded heaven as the place of all ideal perfections, where a glorious God rules in perfect wisdom over perfectly loyal and happy subjects, while earth is "the region of a moral growth through history, that is, of imperfection and gradual unfolding, of creaturely freedom and sin."²

And yet, however startling may be the contrast of heaven and earth, either as painted in the popular fancy, or in the words of our Lord, there is really but one circumstance that makes and keeps them opposed to one another. Take away from heaven the perfect doing of the will of God, and that realm, reputed so changeless, would suffer change, its supernal bliss would pass away and it would darken and sadden down into another such place of distress as our own world. Add the perfect doing of the will of God to this world of ours, and all its shadows and all its sorrows would pass away, like fabled Trolls before the shafts of morning.

¹ H. J. Holtzmann, "N. T. Theol." I., 190.

² Beyschlag, "N. T. Theol." E. T., I., 35.

On the perfect doing of the will of God heaven and earth would coalesce—the dark element in our experience would disappear. So Christ taught us to pray, “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven,” and with rare propriety He made this petition follow immediately upon the petition for the coming of the Kingdom of God.

III. CHARACTER OF THE DIVINE WILL.

(a) Holy.

God's will is HOLY. In antiquity holiness meant no more than ceremonial separation from those things which the freak of superstition pronounced profane and polluted. The idea of holiness was ritual and non-ethical. In Rome religion could allow even a *pontifex maximus* to deride or deny the gods, but Rome would not suffer the least omission or misdirection in the ritual, or the reverence of other gods than those on the official lists. Religion was “the ceremonies of the Roman people.”¹ Lecky says, “The moral idea had at no time been sought in the action of the gods.”² Holiness meant some taboo, some abstinence, some aloofness from acts and things which, from the point of view of morals, were utterly indifferent, but which the bewildering code or usage of the cult pronounced deadly. But already in the Old Testament the idea of holiness had been ethicised. The beauty of holiness, the consummate morality, is the highest and finest thing on earth. It is appropriate and inevitable, therefore, that the holiness of God should be regarded as the challenge to us to strive after holiness, and the model to show us what our holiness must be like. As the old theologian said, “God is the perfect and unchangeable Purity, who demands due purity from His creatures.”³ (*Summa omnisque labis expers in Deo Puritas, puritatem debitam exigens a creaturis*).

God is no autocrat or despot. He does nothing arbitrarily. He is not one to conceive whims, and then, by the authority of His mere decree, clothe His whims with the dignity and importance of laws. There is no vagary in Him. Reason and Justice and the Will of God are not merely harmonious—they are synonymous. It is insolence

¹ Gwatkin, “Knowledge of God,” II., 128.

² “European Morals,” bk. 1, Ch. 2.

³ Quenstedt, qu. in “Hutterus Redivivus,” 120.

for any earthly monarch to say "*Sic volo, sic jubeo*," for the will of any man is darkened by ignorance and debauched by habitual sin, and so the will of any man must clash with eternal reason and right. But it is the very charity and benevolence of God that He should do according to His will in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth, for His will is utterly holy and loving and just.

We may extend our studies, and we may quicken and enlarge imagination till we are able to picture holiness to ourselves in a very high and worthy form, and then we may say that beyond the range of our best thought God's will is holy. It is this holiness, ever near us, to be our kindly encouragement, and yet ever infinitely beyond us, to be a spur to heroic endeavour, which rules in heaven and which ought to rule in earth.

We shall not distress ourselves with any large share in the debate whether it was God or the idea of holiness which came first in the order of things. There is nothing, of course, to prevent people from employing, or, perhaps, wasting, their time in discussing whether God's will existed before holiness and determined what holiness was to be, or whether the idea of holiness was first and determined God's will. Simpler people may put the question in their own way and ask, "Is a thing holy because God is pleased to call it so, or is God pleased with a thing because it is holy?" But in no sense is this a formidable difficulty. Holiness did not arise before God's will, and God's will did not originate before holiness. They are co-equal magnitudes, and, if we may so speak about eternal things, they are co-eval. Holiness and the will of God are identical—there never could be a time when the one existed without the other. Take some elementary sort of illustration. One cannot call a man "father" unless he have a child, and one cannot think of a "child" without a father. Fatherhood and childhood rise together, and they live inseparably united. So the will of God and holiness are inseparable conceptions. Holiness could not exist apart from the will of God, if we admit that there is any God at all, and the will of God is inconceivable apart from holiness, unless we are prepared to welcome a world in which there is something better than the God of the world. Principal Caird has said, "We do not need, as in the case of an earthly potentate, to have recourse to the idea of an authority common to and above both ruler and

subject, of a law of truth and righteousness to which God, as well as man, must submit. For this law is not something foreign to, and outside of, the nature which it controls. A nature absolutely controlled by it is a nature at the same time absolutely identified with it. God *IS* Truth. God *IS* Righteousness. God *IS* Love. They constitute His essence. In being determined by them He is self-determined. In acting out or revealing them He is revealing Himself."¹

(b) Happy and Harmonious.

God's will is harmonious and, therefore, happy. Because God is all-holy, there is no conflict between His willing and His action. Because He wills perfectly He acts perfectly. Everybody knows what a conflict there is between a man's will and his deed. There is a sedition in the realm of our being. We are "at war twixt will and will not." We will what is good and worthy, and, in spite of the excellence of our volitions, our achievements are bad and shameful. Our lovely plans miscarry. We mean life to rise up in all the fairness of a palace of gold and ivory, and all that we manage to raise is some sorry lean-to of wattle and daub, a sore to our eyes and a very doubtful convenience to our days. The sacred writer had to bewail that the good he would he did not and the evil that he would not he did. The heathen poet saw and approved the better things, but he followed the worse. Our wills are not holy—we do not will wholly. This divided will makes all our action discordant, feeble, inconclusive. Then the wrong doing reacts on our will and corrupts it. That means that conscience is debauched and our notion of right is all perverted. But God wills what is holy. His will is whole, harmonious, and, therefore, happy. His actions are all done with the joy and the force of an undivided will, and so on His doing there follows no regret, no wish that things had been done otherwise, no too-late perception of how things might have been done better. God's will is harmonious and happy—He is "The Blessed God."

¹ "Fundamental Ideas," I., 132. Cf Hase, "Hutterus Redivivus," 120.

(c) Unchanging.

God's will is unchanging. Holiness cannot alter. But man's understanding of the divine holiness has grown clearer, and will grow clearer still. The Kingdom of God, as it has been said, "comes down from heaven to earth to find its realisation in an element which is free in relation to God, and, consequently, capable of a free surrender to Him."¹ To the Kingdom in heaven belongs the superlative excellence, so high that it cannot rise, so stablished that it cannot fall. But the Kingdom on earth has a history of moral development in which it more and more approximates to the heavenly pattern. In the same vein, we may go on to say that the holiness of heaven, like the Kingdom of heaven, like all the ideal things above, is consummate. But holiness on earth must be a progressive thing, ever beheld in clearer vision, and the more clearly seen the more ardently embraced and the more fully realised. Man's conception of the holiness of God, as well as of the holiness which he himself is capable of and bound to seek, grows clearer as the ages run. But, meanwhile, all these views of the ideal things are but glimpses, broken lights of that perfection which is in God.

Men have proposed their own gew-gaw schemes, and they have called for helpers and sympathisers with the cry "*Deus vult.*" Not only have things been called the will of God, to which we could not now allow that description, but in the progressive education of man regarding the divine will we have seen a very startling revolution in which things which were declared, even by a respectable authority, to be the will of God, are known to-day by the meanest intelligence to be God's abhorrence.

Speculation has been long and anxious, but to this day speculation has not explained why God should have exercised such marvellous patience in waiting for the slow development of man's understanding of the divine will, why men should have been left to cherish such inverted views of God's holiness, why He should not have interfered by some *coup de main* and made men think and act in perfect conformity with the divine holiness. All we can do is to emphasise again the fact that God was pleased to make the

¹ Beyschlag, N.T. Theol. E.T., I, 35.

world in which we live a *moral* world. God might have made us like the stones by the road-side, with no power of self-direction. He might have compelled us to be good, as a dropped stone is compelled to fall. But if God had made us that way creation would have lost its crowning glory, the world would have been a place of inescapable perfection, and the world in that case would have been horrible. God had made enough determined things, mineral, vegetable and animal, and God passed on to a final, highest stage of His great creation task, saying, "Let us make man in our own image." God gave man a free choice. But the possibility that, of his own choice, man might go right involved necessarily the possibility that, of his own mis-choice, he might go wrong. The possibility of heaven involves the risk of hell. Man can rise to the glory of the angels, and he can fall to the infamy of the devils, *simply because he was made a moral creature, made in the image of God.*

Further, God *MUST* always rule His world by moral methods. If God were to compel us to be good, then that would mean that God Himself had become immoral in making us moral. Without our assent and free choice God can no more make us good than He can ordain the truth of two contradictory statements by divine fiat. You may thrash a little boy if he tells lies or refuses to go to school. But with grown-up persons you must appeal to reason and love and honour. God's guidance of this world is a moral *régime*, and so there is always plenty of room in the world for the folly of man. War, for example, is the product of human folly, but—do not let us forget this—war, and a thousand other horrid facts which perplex the problem of God's providence, would have been impossible if God had not made man in His own image. So close together are life's glory and life's shame!

But, coming down now to things that are within easier grasp for us, we can get a fairly reasonable idea of why the struggle against evil things has been so long and so sore. An evil has to be tolerated for a generation or two, simply because it takes time to declare what are the moral implications of any action or institution or character.¹ After a time, whether it be a wrong whose historical origin we

¹ Cf. Inge, "Faith and its Psychology," 73.

know, or one which rose in that long past that lies behind the very hinterlands of history, the thing which is essentially evil claims the consecration and the protection of what is "venerable," although the claim may rest on nothing higher than the fact of persistence—as if Methuselah were to be canonised for nothing more than his nine hundred and sixty-nine years! More ominous still, evil has always been expert in the fraud of false colours, or *camouflage*, to us a word of recent vogue. "*Diabolus est simia Dei*,"—the devil is God's ape.² Evil has always known how to call itself the will of God, and so secure for itself a large following and a long lease of power. But everything that is of sin is at last detected, no matter how long it may have enjoyed the illegitimate veneration of the ages, no matter how it may have masqueraded as the will of God. The things that can change are changing, and will continue to change, and all these changes are not aimless spinings up and down, and in and out, but the line of progress which is bringing us, stage by stage, to the perfect knowledge and the perfect doing of the will of God.

IV. GOD'S WILL FOR MAN.

What we have hitherto been looking at in this chapter may have had the impersonal character, and, one might add, the dryness of theology. What we have now come to has all the living interest of religion. Theology is, for most people, the abstract thing which is likely to lame and finally to forfeit attention. Religion, with the man of understanding, is life's coloured, songful interest, the challenging thing which dispels his languor, which quickens the thrilling play of his best talents and engrosses his highest being in the noblest business of earth.

The Shorter Catechism begins by asking the question, "What is man's chief end?" Somebody has remarked that there ought to have been a companion question, "What is God's chief end?" Theologians have been very busy in the debate upon this question. It is clearly an issue which they were bound to face, and as clearly it is a question which was likely to produce hot wrangle. It is clearly a matter of the highest importance that we should know, or try to

² Calovius, qu Hase, "Hutterus Redivivus," C. 29, fn.

know, for what purpose God made the world, or, if that is too remote and large an issue for our reach, to try at least to discover why God had called us into existence. We feel that it would be radically unfair, if regarding this last profound question of our origin and our destiny we were left ignorant, if we needed to grope and guess, to search and speculate, with the ultimate possibility of returning from all our questing empty-handed. If a preacher, himself facing the whole mystery of life and death, and called to the tremendous responsibility of guiding others who have the same solemn issue to face, could be only a leader of guessers, if his only business were to be a candle-holder to persons fumbling in a game of hazard, it would be high time to advise him and them to give up the undignified performance altogether. If for these hungering souls of ours, which cannot wait, which have to be satisfied now, we have nothing but a peradventure, then the life which has been thrust upon us could not be pronounced anything but a bitter jest on the part of some derisive demon.

When a man sets out to try to learn from the theologians what was God's last end in creation, he would need to be a hardened hack if his courage did not falter in facing such a book as Jonathan Edwards's "God's Last End in Creation." Fortunately, nothing like the massive and minute erudition of Edwards is needed to discover that which every person is so interested in finding out. Some of the theologians put it that God's last end in creation was His own glory. Others uphold the view that God's ultimate purpose was the good of the creature—God is so essentially love that He "could not but create a world in order that He might create beatitude."¹ Others, as was to be expected, follow a mediating view, and maintain that on any true view of the facts those two ends must be seen to be identical.

Well, this is, after all, more of a theological abstraction, and the theologians may be left to work it out among themselves. The plain man's interest, as we have already insisted, is in putting the question personally—not, "What was God's last end in making a universe?" but, "What was God's purpose in creating *ME*?" The theological question may stand over—the personal question must receive

¹ Fairbairn, "Christ In Modern Theology," 413. Cf. also Candlish "The Christian Doctrine of God," 94, ff.

immediate attention. Paul has an answer to offer us—the will of God is our sanctification. (I Thess. 4, 3). Our present text is Jesus' way of saying the same thing. God is holy. He made me to be, like Himself, holy. It is a most striking thing that our word "like," which had at first only the sense of 'similarity,' should by and by have come to have also the sense of 'affection,' as if the history of the very word went to confirm the common-place observation that we grow conformed to the things that we love, and that we 'like' those things to which we are 'like.' God made me in order that I might 'like' Him, in both senses, that I might love Him, that I might be conformed to His perfect holiness. God's will is the rule of heaven, and it must be the rule of my life. Holiness is the one vocation and fashion in heaven. God will have me begin the practice of holiness here so that when I reach the world of reward I may appear neither odd in that company nor unskilled in its one occupation. So Jesus taught us to pray, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

It is a very compendious way of speaking to say that God wills our sanctification, that, as He is holy, He wills that we be holy. But minds of an ample type will urge that the compendium is too vague. If any of those lovers of detail are anxious to know what the compendium actually includes, nothing better in the way of expansion could possibly be offered than the words of Cyprian.¹ "The will of God is what Christ has done and taught. It is humility in conduct; it is steadfastness in faith, mercy in our works, governance in our habits. It is innocence of injuriousness, and patience under it, preserving peace with the brethren, loving God with all our heart, loving Him as our Father and fearing Him as our God; accounting Christ before all things because He accounted nothing before us, clinging inseparably to His love, being stationed with fortitude and faith at His cross; and when the battle comes for His name and honour, maintaining in words that constancy which makes confession, in torture that confidence which joins battle, in death that patience which receives the crown. This it is to endeavour to be a co-heir with Christ: this it is

¹ "De Orat Dom,"—trans Newman in "The Library of Fathers," III., 185.

to perform the commandment of God, and fulfil the will of the Father."

V. DISEASED WILLS AND THEIR RENEWAL.

No man can give any attention to his own life and character, no man can study the nature and ways of the human spirit, either with or without the help of the ordinary textbooks, but he wakens up to the fact that the human will has suffered some pitiable derangement. The will is not master in its own house. The will is mis-informed, mis-directed. It does not need the acumen of a great philosopher to see that sin poisons and blights the whole wide realm of man's activities, and that the seat of sin "lies not in the sensuous impulses, but in the will that yields to them."¹

It is not necessary for our present purpose to go into the old debate about man's estate by nature. In spite of the finding of the Council of Carthage, in spite of the confessions of churches and the assertions of dogmatists, the shades of Pelagius and Augustine are still struggling in the old endless feud. Perhaps we might think that for ourselves it would be a boon if we could avoid the scene where the antagonists strike and pant in the thick dust of that old controversy. In one sense it does not matter whether we say with Pelagius that human freedom and human capacities have been little soiled and depreciated by the fall, or whether, on the other hand, we maintain, with Augustine, that man in himself is totally incapable of reaching and living the religious life and that he is entirely dependent on the divine grace. It is clear that both views are agreed that there is something radically wrong with human nature and that a salvation of some sort is needed. Whether man is to be saved by the thrust of his own hand, as Pelagius held, or only by divine succour, as Augustine maintained, or by the co-operation of human endeavour and the heavenly helps, as the Council of Trent decided, all are, at least, at one on this that the soul of man is forewandered, lost, and that it needs saving.²

Perhaps, too, it might be not a little to our advantage if

¹ Caird, "Fundamental Ideas," II., 43.

² See Hase, "Hutterus Redivivus," 172, and Calvin, "Institutes," bk. II., chap. 2.

we could drop the old theological jargon altogether. Some words have been abused too long and made to serve in the mean capacity of battle-cries. Partisan catch-words are apt to reach very soon that stage when they inflame passion without enlightening the understanding. To take one case, we could simplify things considerably by dropping the word "will" altogether—it has rather a technical flavour—and we might find and use a homelier and more appealing word. Men, we ought to say, do not *want* what is good and worthy. Their appetites are debauched. They are, in the original sense, dis-gusted. They *want* what is wrong, degrading, unreasonable. If a man is sick, you may offer him bread, you may tempt him with dainties and a healing medicine, but if he does not *want* them he must be left to die. You may plead with such a man. You may bombard him with the weightiest ordnance that can be used to assail the mind. You may declaim to him that, for his wife's sake and his children's sake, for the sake of his brethren and his calling, he ought to take every means to recover his health. But, in the end, you simply worry him. To him your talk is noise, not persuasion. He does not *want* health—the desire of those things is dead in him, and he turns away from your medicine and your eloquence to die.

Now the preacher mostly finds himself facing such a situation. He culls the fairest and most fragrant words in which to present salvation. He seeks all just terms of warning and horror in which to set forth the tragedy of lost souls. He puts intellect and artistry into his preaching. Yet, all the time, he is conscious that there is something dark, sinister, insuperable, that is resisting him and the God for whom he speaks. What is this resistance? It is the will of man. Men do not *want* God's ways. Their objection is not one of reason or of experience. It is simply an objection of distaste, or suspicion, and, therefore, a far more ominous and intractable resistance than any founded on reason and experience. Men do not *want* what God offers, and that is the end of the whole matter. It looks like as if men were in the position of the invalid who has lost his appetite, as if nothing could be done and they had to be left to that fate which they might quite easily have avoided.

The most heart-breaking thing in the world is to argue with a drunkard. He will endure your sharpest animadversions without resentment, nay, he will welcome your rebuke

with penitential gratitude. He himself will put fire and sting into your mild disapprobation. He will acquiesce in every argument which you can use to show the folly of orgy and the wisdom of temperance. He may even promise amendment and shed tears for the hurt he has done himself and his dependents. And he goes out from you only to toss himself down to a dirtier depth of his old shame. He goes from you, you would almost swear, to be whirled down by the devil that possesses him to a lower and a longer shame, just because he seemed for a moment to be faltering in allegiance to his imperious master. What is the matter that he and you should have such an indignity as this thrust upon you, made to look as foolish as a couple of mice who sit and plan heroic things, forgetting the cat? What is wrong is that the man's will is fettered. He has not only the slave's bonds, but the slave's mind. The will in him is traitor, sold to the service of the enemy who thunders at the gate for surrender. A "black pope" guides the man's destinies. Reason and conscience and pity are all set aside with the brusquerie and the brutality of a German High Command in spurning humane and religious considerations.

This kind of statement, then, is the popular presentation of the facts which the Augustinian theology tried to put in a scientific way. To the great majority of Christians who have tried to look into their own hearts and into the facts of life, it has seemed that the Augustinian theology is the best, at least, that it is nearer to the truth than any of its rivals.

One cannot think of any words that cut so sharp and so deep as those which our Lord used in view of the very facts which we are now considering. If the tenderest address and entreaty, if the poetry of the speaker's words, if the radiant commendation which the speaker's own character lent to His message, if the evident truth of His gospel and the infinite value of the rewards that He offered could ever have carried a message with conviction to the hearts of hearers, then Jesus ought to have had an easy success with all who heard Him. Yet even HE was baffled, and the wail of His disappointment still rises to our hearing in the poignant words, "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have eternal life." (John 5, 40). Ye *WILL* not! This is the dark enemy who, with closed visor and tireless cunning, resists—alas, so successfully!—the proclamation of the King of Heaven and the arms of His prophetic soldiery.

Now if that were absolutely the end of the business we might doubt if Jesus would ever have commanded His disciples to pray for the doing of the will of God on earth as it is done in heaven. Since Jesus taught us to use this petition, we may reasonably conclude that the sickness of man's soul is not yet desperate. Celsus, one of the earliest and most mordant of the critics of Christianity, said that the new cult attempted an absurdity, for the good are good and the bad are bad, and it is absolutely impossible for Christianity, or anything else, to recruit the evil for the service of the good, or to change the evil and make it good.¹ But surely, by teaching us the use of this petition, Jesus led us to believe that in God there is a power to renew the will, to subdue man's will to God's will, not by bludgeoning and manacling the will of man—which would be nothing less than stultifying God's own decision to create *moral* beings—but by some argument which does honour to God's love and man's freedom, by some high suasion that wins a man to will as naturally *with* God as before he had willed *against* God.² The old Christians, who had such ripe experience in the Christian life, who brought such interest and learning to the study of its history, knew that God does renew the will of man. They spoke of the work of God's Spirit as convincing men of their sin, enlightening their minds in the knowledge of Christ, and *renewing their will*.³ The misery of the unrenewed state often is that men know God's will as they know facts in the histories and the grammars of antiquity, as things that have no relation to the inspiration and guidance of the daily life. God can make that potential knowledge kinetic. He can change the barren knowledge of the head into the progenitive knowledge of the heart. The refutation of old Celsus is written big on every page of the world's history. The proof that men can be converted is just the fact that they are converted, and so well converted that they who once loved darkness and served the kingdom of Satan with both hands zealously would recoil now in horror from the remotest association with the sin wherein they formerly delighted.

¹ See Froude's essay on "Origen and Celsus," in "Short Studies," vol. IV., 361, ff.

² Oman, "Grace and Personality," *passim*.

³ Shorter Catechism, qu. 31.

VI. RESULTS OF DOING GOD'S WILL.

Stated in one broad sentence, as we have already seen, the result of the progressive realisation of God's will is that earth is changed to heaven. But we may profitably spare a little time for the analysis of this result.

(a) Entry into the Kingdom of God.

It is the doing of the will of God that gives us the right of entry into the Kingdom of God. We have already seen how the great commentators were struck by the close connection between the foregoing petition, which deals with the coming of the Kingdom, and the present petition, which deals with the doing of God's will. There is no honorary or hereditary membership in the Kingdom of God. Every man must earn his own title, and the only way in which the right of entry can be won is by doing God's will. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 7, 21). If we are not doing God's will but our own, then we have no title to His kingdom, and if we pretend that we have a title we are in the foolish state of thinking that we can play off a successful trick against the Great Simpleton. Men ought to give up their pathetic belief in pass-words. Reliance on magic is surely dead now. It used to be thought that there were potent words, and if one were only lucky enough to gain possession of the correct formula, one could fly or become invisible, one could raise storms or cleave mountains, like Michael Scott. Once there flourished an innocent belief that it was good enough for the Kingdom of God to repeat a form of holy words. It was fancied that in certain words and phrases there was an open-sesame which was potent enough to drive in the gates of heaven for any sort of man who could pronounce the incantation. By this time the belief in magic ought to be as completely exploded in the religious world as in the world of every-day commerce. It is absolutely less than nothing to keep up chattering "Lord, Lord." The ordinary politicians of this world seem to have repudiated bimetallism as an economic fallacy. The entry to the Kingdom, certainly, is purchased with one currency, with the doing of God's will, and a man simply declares him-

self crazy if he thinks that the Kingdom of God will admit a double currency.

(b) Peace of Mind.

To do the will of God is the only way in which a man can reach assurance and peace of mind. "If any man will *do* His will he shall *know* of the doctrine." (John 7, 17). It is a fearfully perilous way of knowing Christianity if we seek its acquaintance only in libraries and class-rooms. Religion is not a sort of hare to be run down by the hounds of reason. At this time of the day we might well ask in astonishment why people refuse to see that no valuable result whatever has come either to men or religion by making faith an academic grindstone, like the Latin grammar, for sharpening the intellectual powers. The more scholastically men have dealt with the faith and the more Christianity has been abandoned to the grammarians and the logicians, the more numerous and desolating have become the theories and the disputes about the faith, till at last men's minds are so perplexed that, if there is still supposed to be any help in religion, nobody has the least idea what it is or in what direction it is to be found. The way to assurance is not by debate, but by doing. Religion is not a logic, but a life. It is a thousand times more happy and hopeful to do God's will than to debate about it. Let a man lose the clarity which comes from action, and let him give himself to the confusion which is begotten of debate, he must be perplexed and paralysed, robbed of the imperial mien and the conquering might, he must be reduced to the penury of a timid hope that Jesus may possibly be one solution of the soul's problem among many others, all of them precarious. If a man *does* the will of God, he *knows* that there is only one name given in heaven an dearth whereby he must be saved.

(c) The Angelic Character.

It is the doing of the will of God that enobles man, that gives to human character the angelic quality. There is no need at present to enter on any elaborate review of the Old Testament doctrine of angels, or the views regarding angels which were expressed by our Lord.¹ In our own conceptions of the angels there is probably a great deal which has simply been carried over from the region of childhood's

fairy tales. God's angels are, of course, not fairies. They are the ministers, pure, swift and strong, who attend upon God's majesty. As was recognised, even in the days of the old covenant, the excellence of the angel nature lies in one quality which they have in perfection—they do the will of God. "Bless the Lord, ye his angels, that do his commands, harkening to the voice of His power." (Ps. 103, 20). To do God's will is to be like the angels, excellent in strength, swift in the nobility of service, pure in thought and deed.

(2) Likeness to Christ.

Far better than likeness to the angels is likeness to our Lord Himself. There is no sense in tarrying with the angels in the outer court when we can come with Christ into the holy of holies. It is the doing of God's will that brings us near Christ and makes us like Him. Who is Christ's brother, Christ's sister? Not they who were nursed on the same knee as He, who called the same woman mother, but they, in every time and clime, who with Him count it the dearest task of their days to do the will of God.

Jesus has been before the world now for nearly two thousand years, and the thing that one despairs of understanding is how any man can see the love and the wisdom of God in Christ, how any man can read the gospels, and see the radiant figure of Him who stands there appealing and offering Himself to men, how any man can hear the verdict of two thousand years, which pronounces Jesus to be not only time's fairest character, but the supreme conscience and the unfailing friend of this world—one despairs of understanding how any man can see all this, or a tithe of this, without falling in love with Jesus, without praying passionately to be made like Him. Well, if any man has seen Him and desired Him, he must know that there is only one way to the heart and the secret of Jesus—"Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother and sister and mother." (Matt. 12, 50).

VII. GOD'S WILL TO BE DONE, NOT MERELY TO BE BORNE.

We have now to observe that God's will is something to *do*, rather than something to *bear*. We must not allow ourselves to think that "Thy will be done" is a vernacular

¹ Godet, on "Les Anges," in "Etudes Bibliques."

for the broken and the afflicted. If we keep these words for the strait days, and sigh them forth in the scant breath of sickness or penury, there will grow up in the minds of critical observers a suspicion that we are making a virtue of necessity, that we are submissive to God only when resistance has become useless. Indeed it is a just criticism that tells us that there has been too much shelter and coziness in our religion, that our spiritual aspirations are too much like the idea of afternoon-tea in a quiet summer garden. It is time for urgency, virility, the rude blast of the world's need and sorrow to blow away our swooning quietude. It is time we left off shirking and cried out in the soldier's words, "Flog me and spur me, set me straight at some vile job I fear and hate."¹ The Crusaders cried out, "It is the will of God," and they donned their mail and seized sword and battle-axe and set out to tramp the weary miles to that land where the holy tomb was in sacrilegious hands of the Moslems. Every discovery of the will of God must be a clarion call to action.

Worshippers in church sing many beautiful hymns about the will of God. Our best poets have chanted the same theme with a sweetness that makes their words linger in the ear like music and in the heart like comfortable wisdom—

O living will that shalt endure
 When all that seems shall suffer shock,
 Rise in the spiritual rock,
 Flow through our lives and make them pure.

But if our study has been of the slightest value, it must now be clear to us that the will of God is not something for discussion, not primarily a topic for sermons, not primarily a tender theme to be written up in velvety hymns and in elegiac verses. Primarily God's will is a thing for doing—not for deferred or languid or intermittent doing, but a thing to be done instantly, constantly, strenuously, in earth as in heaven.

VIII. THE VINDICATION OF GOD'S WILL—THE LAST THINGS.

Nobody nowadays is much interested in the chapters of the books on dogmatic theology that are entitled *De*

¹ See Burroughs, "The Valley of Decision," 301.

Novissimis. Eschatology has rather lost its front seat in the subjects of theological interest. We have already seen how Schweitzer distinguishes between the eschatology of the Church and the eschatology of Jesus. And in so far as interest has grown more and more intense around the eschatology of the gospels it has grown colder about the eschatology of the church. The old dogmatists laid down the programme for death and judgment with great assurance and detail, as if they were a sort of private secretaries to the dread powers, but somehow our modern minds cannot display the same certainty and calmness as theirs in the face of such tremendous things as *damnatio et beatitudo eterna*. We are of a softer, more cautious type. We have a lingering fondness for "the larger hope," the doctrine which appealed so strongly to the thinkers of the Victorian Age.¹ Origen was one who long ago believed that "if all punishment has only educative significance, there can be no question of an eternity of punishment in hell."² Origen was very logical, and he went on to assert that even for demons there could be no eternal punishment, "seeing that to God there is no evil which is unhealable, and the duration of the healing discipline is only different in different individuals according to the measure of the evil." The Catholic Church would not canonise a teacher like Origen who taught that there is to be an 'apokatastasis,' a bringing back of the old innocence and joy in a better Eden. But many now would fain hope that Origen had the right of it. It is hard to tell how it came about, but even among the most pious people that one knows there is now little reference made to death and the last judgment. The lurid doctrine of the penal fire, which used to stampede so many scared mortals into the Kingdom of God, is scarcely ever mentioned now—it must have been proved false or ineffective. We know that people who take a lively interest in the doctrine of the Second Coming, who have settled its date and its details, are deservedly avoided like any others in the regiment of tiresome cranks. It is not our business to enter and decide upon all these dread and difficult matters. Purgatory, Eternal Hope, Palingenesia, Eternal Bliss and

¹ See Farrar's "Eternal Hope."

² See Pfleiderer, "Philosophy and Development of Religion," II, 278.

Damnation—we ought to leave all these subjects in the dim twilight where God has set them.

There is only one thing that we must insist upon in this connection. It is quite clear that God's will must be vindicated. Some Christian writers, as well as Mr. H. G. Wells, have found relief from the pressure of the problem of evil by declaring that God's power is limited.¹ But although these views may command a momentary respect, we draw back ere long from a conjecture which seems to make anything an insuperable, or even a serious, obstacle to the triumph of God's purposes, and if the will of God be holy, just and reasonable, as we have seen it to be, then not only ought it to prevail, but it must prevail. For all the trivial rushlights that men have tried to throw forward into the great darkness, the future still remains the unlighted gloom. But to this we hold fast, that, as Christ taught us to pray, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," so the day will come when the prayer will be perfectly answered, when all wills shall will as God wills, when the havoc wrought upon God's fair world shall be so completely repaired that the distinction between earth and heaven shall have disappeared for ever. Nothing in the fears of our own hearts, nothing in the confident dogmatisms of unbelief, nothing in the tired and timid conjectures of Christian apologists can shake our trust in this final triumph of God's purpose.

This is all the eschatology that we have, or need to have. God never once raises the curtain that screens the future to satisfy the morbid curiosity of those peculiar persons who would rather dote on the gold streets of the New Jerusalem than work seriously on the miry ways and the defective sanitation of the earthly Jerusalem. God has given us a very small outfit in the way of eschatological truth, just enough to send us back to the duty and the task of the present day with a good heart. We know that the will of God, which we serve, is sovereign, and that it must prevail. We know that only they who do the will of God here on earth can find entry and congenial employ in heaven.

¹ See Rashdall's paper on "The Problem of Evil" in "The Faith and the War," ch. IV.; and A. Boyd Scott, "Branches of the Cross," 150, ff.

CHAPTER VI.

THE MATERIAL AND THE SPIRITUAL.

Matt. 6, 10. Give us this day our daily bread.

There is a certain type of mind which is distressed, not to say angered, at finding in the Lord's Prayer a petition dealing with bread. Some discover here an interloper who needs an impressive apology to save him from the ignominy of rough handling and ejection. To them the petition for bread is an incongruity, like a soiled and ragged vagrant among the sons of a king, like a poor child of time among the bright spirits of eternity. In the petitions which precede we were concerned with timeless, spiritual, universal things, the fatherhood of God, the hallowing of His name, the coming of the Kingdom and the doing of God's will. In the petitions which follow we are back again among the eternal considerations, we are dealing with the forgiveness of sin, with temptation and with delivery from the Evil One. And here, to the perplexity of many, is the intrusion of the material, the body, and a petition for the body's satisfaction in bread! This material reference in the very heart of such a galaxy of radiant spiritualities is felt to be a surprise and an affront. It affects the fastidious like a piece of half-dry clay strung in the middle of a row of priceless pearls.

The feeling of incongruity was so acute that those super-fine persons thought it necessary to get rid of the material reference altogether. It happens that the word which we translate 'daily' is a word which is very hard to render.¹ The word occurs nowhere but in the two versions of the Lord's Prayer. It is a word for which two very obvious etymologies are given, according to one of which the translation ought to be 'supersubstantial,' according to the other it ought to be either 'future' or 'daily.' The offended

¹ See the discussion of ἐπιούσιος in e.g. Carr's "Matthew"—Cambridge Greek Testament.

parties have preferred to translate the word in such a way as will evaporate all reference to the common thing which we call bread. The word 'daily' must be spiritualised. It must stand for something immaterial. Our Lord, they contend, must have been teaching us to ask, not for the appeasing of the appetite of the body, but for the satisfaction of the hunger of the soul. He is not thinking of that bread which is the gift of earth to satisfy our earthy bodies, but of that higher bread which is the bounty of heaven to satisfy our heavenly nature. It is quite true that our Lord often spoke about bread in a parabolic way. "Man," He said, "shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. (Matt. 4, 4). "My meat," He declared, "is to do the will of Him that sent me." (John, 4, 34). In the very chapter from which the ordinary version of the Lord's Prayer is taken He warns people against being too anxious about the body, about eating and drinking and clothing. (Matt. 6, 31). Accordingly, critics of the type that we are now thinking about conclude that here we have a purely spiritual petition. By a peculiar translation of an equivocal Greek word, and by a deduction from our Lord's usual way of speaking about bread, they fancy that they have secured an eviction order to expel the material reference altogether from the Lord's Prayer, and so to leave it from end to end one gleaming, unbroken succession of spiritualities.

I. ASCETICISM IN THE GOSPELS.

We may say that there is a strain in our Lord's teaching which is unmistakably ascetic. He seemed to look with pessimist eyes on all earth's goods. This is most clearly seen in the stern and hopeless things which He said about money. He made money a rival to God Himself, a rival whose prowess and pretensions were far from being despicable. "No man can serve two masters—ye cannot serve God and Mammon." To the rich man who came running to Him that he might ask the conditions on which a man may inherit the life eternal, He said, "Sell whatever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven." (Mark, 10, 21). He declared that it was "easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of the heavens." (Matt. 19, 24). We know that Jesus Himself forsook His trades-

man's craft. He lived unwed. He wandered about in a way that made Him like a new Buddha. He had long periods of fasting. If our accounts be reliable He said that there were particular types of strongly entrenched devils which could not be evicted but by prayer and fasting. (Mark, 9, 29. R. V. rightly omits "and fasting.")

Passages like Matt. 5, 29-30, which speak about cutting off a right hand and plucking out an offending eye, or like that remorseless passage in Matt. 19, 12, which speaks of those who "have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake," or like Luke 14, 26, which says that no man can be a disciple of Jesus unless he "hates" his father and his mother, "yea, and his own life also," very easily led the Catholic Church in ancient times, and such people as Schopenhauer and Tolstoi in modern times, to believe and say that Christianity is essentially ascetic.

But that which blinded and misled men was only the surface impression of the gospel narrative. Men forgot that our Lord demanded celibacy, not for itself, but in order that the avenues to life's highest endeavours might be unimpeded. As a matter of parenthesis, we may remark that Jesus must have perceived, like the wise of all ages, that celibacy in itself may as readily furnish facilities for the foul life as offer aids to the fair life:—"Down to Gehenna or up to the throne He travels the fastest who travels alone." Christ did not share the idea that poverty and celibacy were things which in themselves compelled approval and earned recompense from God. It was totally overlooked that, while John's disciples fasted, the followers of Jesus feasted, and that Jesus Himself was gibbeted as a glutton and a wine-bibber. (Matt. 11, 19). If Jesus forbade divorce, it was forgotten that He had never forbidden marriage. It was forgotten too, that the first disciples had never interpreted the gospel ascetically, that they did not repudiate their wives, or leave their old vocations, as consequences and conditions of following Jesus. Weinelt¹ says very correctly that Jesus estimated the goods of this world according as they helped men to be pure and good, or hindered men therein. Finally, it will be helpful to notice a point which Harnack has enlarged upon. The

¹ "N. T. Theol.," 63, ff.

gospel is in essence, faith in God, forgiveness of sins, meekness and neighbourly love, and this is a scheme of thing in which no room is left for ascetic or legalistic maxims.²

II. ASCETICISM IN THE CHURCH.

Everybody knows that there is a long succession of teachers in the Christian Church who have decided that the body is the enemy of the soul, that the body is a dark, insidious, implacable foe, with whom no treaty is possible, who has to be assailed with every weapon and beaten with every violence. The body, they declare, is the seat and the breeding-ground of sin. The body is the overflowing puddle that pours its putrid stain on the fairness of the soul. The body is a sort of lunatic with homicidal tendencies, and we must manage the body as once they managed madmen, we must seize it, cage it and belabour it with many and unsparing stripes.

We can see the pitiful outcome of this conception in the history of the Church. In the fourth and the fifth centuries all the great writers wrote about monasticism in a falutin strain of eulogy. Athanasius wrote the life of Antony—although the authorship is warmly disputed—and that extravagant story, whether it was authentic history or mere fiction, a book full of wonders and breathless with wonder, drove many to the desert to become monks, and turned all the rest of mankind into the devoted admirers of the anchorites.¹ Monasticism was by no means the invention of Christianity, but once the monkish vogue came in, the Christian world displayed a passion for the practice and the praise of monasticism which the world has seldom seen equalled, and never seen surpassed. All that the New Testament said about the sacredness of the family and the honour of marriage was quite forgotten. The words which Jesus Himself had uttered and the full life which He by His example had sanctioned were as things dropped into the abyss of forgetfulness. Men and women ran madly to take upon themselves what was called “the full yoke of Christ.” There were “virgins devoted to God,” who refused

² “Wes. d. Christ,” 50, ff.

¹ Augustine, “Confessions,” viii., 6.

marriage in order to be betrothed to Christ. There were anchorites who repudiated every traffic with the common life in order that they might dedicate themselves to the contemplation of the divine mysteries. Those people were supposed to rank higher in the favour of God than others who had not made the like refusal. They lived the *vita religiosa*, and the other Christians who continued to cherish the family life and who kept going the wheels of the world's political and commercial machinery had to get on and be as cheerful as possible in the possession of a second-rate sort of religion.¹

The history of those who retired to the desert and the cells, so that they might wage a sleepless vendetta against the menace of the body, is peculiarly distressing. Days and years were passed in abject futilities. Macarius prayed a hundred times a day; Paul the Simple, three hundred times, and he was greatly chagrined to hear of a virgin who beat him easily with a score of seven hundred times a day. A monk, on the command of his superior, carried water every day for a year, in all weathers, to water a rotten log—one is lost to know whether the imbecile command or the fatuous obedience is the more appalling.² At any rate this was the occupation of the monks, and this is the occupation in which they earned fame. Men's bodies were treated with an ingenuity of insult. To take a rather late instance, Peter of Alcantara, born in 1499, ate once in three days, lived in a cell four and a half feet long, where he could neither stand up nor lie down, and slept kneeling, not more than an hour and a half a day. He always went bareheaded, so that in the winter the ice matted his hair and in the summer the sun gave him fearful headaches, and all this foolery he justified by saying that before God one must not dare to be covered. The bodies of the most eminent saints were in such a shocking state that a plain English description of them would be repulsive, and our authors consult the susceptibilities of delicate readers by using such foreign words as *pedocchi* and such weird English words as 'dispediculate.'³ Discomfort, pain, emaciation, filth, vermin,

¹ Sell, *Christentum und Weltgeschichte*, I, 56; Harnack, "Das Wes. d. Christ," 51; Lecky, "Map of Lfie," 46.

² See Farrar, "Lives of the Fathers," Vol. II., chap. xiv.

³ James, "Varieties of Religious Experience," 360, 306.

sleeplessness, stopped ears, mute lips, downcast eyes—all these were supposed to be the true allies of the saints in their sore battle against the arch enemy, the body. "The ascetic poured out the wine of life, and adored the empty cup."¹

Herodotus tells us of the Arimaspi, a one-eyed race, who waged war against the griffins for possession of the gold which those monsters gathered from the bed of the river Arimaspias. The ascetics were another one-eyed race, who fought for the possession of a treasure. But the monks, with all that pathetic constancy of theirs which faced heroically the most appalling hardships, fought for a gold which they never won, which, with their weapons of warfare, they never could win. Every sin that has a name in the catalogue of iniquity, gluttony, uncleanness, avarice, anger, melancholy, despair, vain glory and pride, was as much at home in the cells of the anchorites as in the streets of the sinful cities from which they had fled. Here is the testimony of Jerome—his awful words, the words of one who had sought salvation by the way of asceticism, are the last condemnation of asceticism as a means of salvation—"My face was pale with fasting, yet my mind was heaving with desire in my frigid body, and before a man already prematurely dead in the body the fires of concupiscence alone were breaking forth."²

Another pitiful thing to remember is that the complete suppression of bodily desire, even if the monkish discipline could have attained that, is not necessarily the delivery from sin. Sin is not the disease of the body, but the ailment of the soul, and to try to reach salvation for the soul by assailing the body with hunger and thongs is as monstrously beside the mark as attempting to restore a corpse by painting its cheeks red. There are sins which are not only made easy by an avoidance of sensuality, but which actually demand such an abstinence, "Avarice will surpass the self-denial of the pure and the temperate, or even the physical maceration of the saints."³ It is plain that the quelling of carnal desire would leave the deep seat of sin untouched.

¹ Gwatkin, "Knowledge of God," I, 8.

² See Farrar, "Lives of the Fathers," II., 227.

³ Caird, "Fundamental Ideas," II., 42.

"The aged reprobate's comparative purity is no more worth than the pauperised spendthrift's abstinence from extravagance."¹

Asceticism which promised to be a thoroughfare to a full salvation has always in the event proved to be a blind alley.

III. THE SENSUALISTS.

Again, there have been people, to be counted by the million, whereas the ascetics were only to be reckoned by the tens, who thought that the body and its satisfaction were everything. If the monks thought that the soul was all in all, and the body nothing, there were great hosts of others who thought that the soul was nothing and the body everything. After all, there have been few in the world like Jerome, or Antony, or Peter of Alcantara, or Suso. But the followers of Lucullus, the Roman epicure, have been a very great army, and the one reason why his following has not been ever so much greater is just that men's purses did not reach as far as their carnal desires. The theory and the practice of the *bon vivant* have been a thousand times more popular than the theory and the practice of the ascetic. Men have given indescribable pains and ingenuity to the clothing and the perfuming of the body and to the gratification of every carnal appetite, as if in these lay the ultimate hope of life's happiness. If the ascetics cried out, "Let us pray and fast and weep," theirs was a thin voice compared with the reverberating chorus of those who cried, "Let us eat and drink and be merry."

IV. CLASHING VIEWS AND THEIR RECONCILIATION.

On other occasions and in other connections we have, doubtless, been astonished at the clash of human opinions. But here, on the very threshold of life, where we have to consider what is to be our relation to the most elementary things in the world, we meet with such a strife of opinion as must affect us with wonder and pain, as must, indeed, bring us almost to the desperation of those who live in a world of sheer delirium. What is earlier, what is more natural or necessary than eating and drinking, than laughing and

¹ Caird, "Fundamental Ideas," II., 41.

sleeping? Yet immediately we abandon ourselves to the satisfaction of eating and drinking, immediately we indulge in the comfort of sleep and the refreshment of mirth, we are assailed by those cadaverous monitors who denounce us for doing what in the interest of our souls we ought to avoid. If again we abstain from those pleasures which we thought so natural and innocent we have to meet another band of advisers, whose persons are outlined in generous curves, a company of counsellors with rollicking airs and rubicund faces, who tell us that all our abstinence is labour flung away on vanity, who bid us eat and drink, "for you know not whence you came nor why," eat and drink, "for you know not why you go, nor where."

What are we to do in view of this clash of opinion? We ask if there be any delivery from this dilemma, and the petition which is now before us is the clear suggestion of the direction in which we have to seek our solution. No one can help noticing that there is a wonderful sanity in the view of our Lord. The epicures, the apostles of indulgence, forget the soul, forget all that lifts man above the beast and the moment, all that makes him kin to God. On the other hand, the ascetics, the apostles of abstinence, forget the temple in which the soul is shrined—they seem to think that the altar will be fairer if we pollute or destroy the sanctuary that canopies the altar. Our Lord, with that balance and restraint which make His teaching so memorable and so saving, would not have the body destroyed for the sake of the soul any more than He would have the soul castaway for the gain of a whole world. It is a very jejune sort of thing to say that our Lord did justice to man's spiritual nature. But it is overlooked that Jesus did justice to man's bodily nature. He put soul and body in their true relationship. He has brought harmony and agreement out of the clash of opinion. He has taught us that the body is no more to be accounted the soul's irreconcilable enemy, but the soul's indispensable ally. Our Lord, remembering that we are body as well as soul, taught us to pray for bread. He is no ring-leader among the gluttons and wine-bibbers, although they tried to fix that odium on Him. He is not the patron or the pattern of such men as Peter of Alcantara or St. Antony, although there are modern critics who want to make out that Jesus is nothing better than a

new Buddha preaching hatred of the world and flight from it. He taught us, when He bade us pray, "Give us this day our daily bread," that the body is to be nourished, not pampered, that the body is the soul's colleague and not its tyrant. "While it is the dishonour and the degradation of the spirit to seek satisfaction in the flesh, it is equally the dishonour of the flesh to become, not the organ, but the end of the spirit."¹

(a) Bread, a Means of Grace.

What is religion? Etymologically, religion is that by which we are bound to God. Religion brings us to God and leagues us with Him in a bond of eternal life. Religion is the instrument of our communion and intercourse with God. And it is fine to note that Jesus saw in the common bread, which sustains man's body and gives him the power to ensure his worldly success, a servant of religion and a guide to God and all the eternal things. Jesus insisted that God made man's body, and that this body, made by God, could never have been intended to become a terror to scare man away from God. Men are brought to consider their need of God by the body's hunger just as much as by the hunger of the soul. Nay more, in the ordinary bread which satisfies our body even the purblind can see the same shining qualities of God's love and forethought as in that redemption by which our souls are delivered from the eternal darkness and death.

Jesus, we should note, taught men to pray, "*GIVE* us this day our daily bread." The ultimate truth about bread is that we cannot buy it, that we cannot take it by force, that we cannot get it any way but by God's free gift. Bread is God's gift, His gratis goodness, for the body. Salvation, which like bread we can neither buy, nor deserve, nor seize, is God's free grace for the soul.

We do well to be thankful for all the means of grace. Many people feel solemnly happy during the hour of the sanctuary. To them the praise has an uplift and a melting appeal. The prayer carries them into the presence-chamber of the Most High. The preaching lifts them for an all-too short season to a mood in which the mean and

¹ Caird, "Fundamental Ideas," II., 70.

coarse things no longer charm and oppress. The Sabbath and the sanctuary lend a holy impression which abides all the week, like the lingering glory which Moses brought with him from the presence of the Eternal. But there have been simple peasants who found a means of grace in a draught from a wayside well, who would not quench their thirst without first uncovering and giving God thanks. Any man ought to be able to find religion in the very bread that he eats. It comes from God to us, and it is meant to bring us to Him. We certainly need to work for the harvest. But the workshop in which we toil is God's, not ours. The tools and the cunning to use them, the materials and the strength to manipulate them, all come from God. God *GIVES* us, we may therefore say again, free bread, and the bread that God gives for the satisfaction of our body's hunger ought to be, and is meant to be, a minister of religion to us, an usher to bring us nearer Him, a sacrament and a covenant to draw tighter the pleasant fetters that bind us to Him.

(b) Bread, an unfailing Supply for a constant Need.

There is nothing more regularly recurrent than hunger. The body, like the daughter of the horse-leach, is never satisfied. The complexion of our days changes. Some days crave the company of merry, even of boisterous friends. Other days court solitude. Some days bring blithe hours of singing. Other days are slow hours of sighing. Some days have a victorious elation in them, and we tingle with the exultation, not knowing very well why we should be so carried up. Other days envelop us in a cold misery, and we are unaware of any particular reason for depression. Sunny days and sad days—the complexion of our life changes from day to day, nay, from hour to hour, in a way that defies all calculation. But hunger is the one character that is common to all our days. Every day our bodies cry for bread, and every day God gives us the refreshment of bread. Every day has its hunger, and its bread-supply, and every day's hunger is a monitor to remind us how utterly we are dependent on Him.

The great war made people alive to the fact that the world lives literally from hand to mouth. In olden times when the harvest failed, the towns and villages were visited

by famine and in the wake of starvation came pestilence and the decimation of the population. But even now, with all our boasted means of communication and all our facilities for the interchange of commodities, we are practically balancing all the time on the edge of famine. If the harvest were to be a universal failure this year we have not sufficient food to keep us living till next year came to repair the calamity. The exercise of a little imagination on this one fact will disclose to us not only an economical but a religious wonder. From the beginning of his existence till now man has had a recurrent hunger, and against this constant need it was impossible to make any security of provision. Our race is still here, and that is the proof that God has never failed to provide the daily supply for man's daily need.

Bread is not the luxury of the rich. Bread is not the *bonne bouche* of the gourmand's table. Religion, again, is not the monopoly of the well-born or the wealthy or the learned. Religion is not the solemn privilege of some high and select occasion. Religion is the daily, hourly need of every son of man. The healthy body clamours in all its exhausted cells many times a day for food, and God gives the body food. The healthy soul in its weariness cries out constantly for God, the living God, and God gives Himself, the Bread of Life, to satisfy the hungry soul.

(c) Bread, a Simple and Wholesome Provision.

Jesus then knew no enmity, far less any incompatibility, between body and soul. "Body and soul exist only in and for each other: the body is not *a* body, but the body of the soul: the soul is not *a* soul, but the soul of the body."¹ We are never to think that the petition for bread in the midst of such a prayer is "a declension to the cares of the common life"²—even in the prayer for bread Jesus is still fostering the highest welfare of the soul. He encourages us to pray for bread, but we cannot ignore that the provision which he bids us seek is *bread*, a satisfaction which is at once simple and wholesome. Matthew Henry, prince of all the commentators, says, "We ask for bread. That teaches us sobriety and temperance. We ask for bread, not dainties

¹ Denney, "Studies in Theology," 70.

² H. J. Holtzmann, "Akadem. Predigten," 8.

or superfluities, that which is wholesome though it be not nice." It is quite true that our Lord knew nothing, not even at a distance, of the sybarite life. His own wants were few and easily satisfied. Confections and dainties were hardly in the world of His acquaintance, to say nothing of the world of his choice. His was not a luxurious mind. He asked for bread—He was no fasting monk. He asked no more than bread—He was no sleek epicure.

It will not, I hope, be felt any overdriving of the point if we now insist that Jesus taught us to pray for bread, not dainties. No doubt many people lionised and followed those who came to us recently panegyrising "the simple life," only to grow tired of the new style of things and go back soon to the old gorged existence with all the keener appetite because of a short season's coquetry with the doctrine of abstinence. No doubt it is a tiresome thing, tedious as the moralities of a copy-book, to hear denunciations of those who sit down at Gargantuan feasts, for whose furnishing all the storehouses have been pillaged, all the gardens looted, all the seas and streams netted, all the vineyards spoiled. But the plain truth after all is just this, that bread—if we may be allowed to insist on the literal expression—is the most easily and cheaply secured of all foods, and, what is more wonderful, it is the food which we can make our whole sustenance without nausea or disrelish.

Jesus had that wise comprehensiveness which is so sadly lacking in the epicures and the ascetics. A good writer says that "only on one condition can there be any talk of a conflict between the higher and the lower nature, if, namely, there is a sense in which mind is capable of being materialised, or matter of being spiritualised." The epicures forgot that mind may be materialised, and the ascetics forget that matter may be spiritualised. The epicures flatter the flesh at the expense of the spirit, and the ascetics think to save the spirit by destroying the spirit's ally, the body. Jesus conserves both, and bands them in a league of mutual honour and help. Our bodies are to be cared for in a simple, wholesome way. Some men have starved themselves to death. Many more have been so immoderately bibulous that we may say they have com-

¹ Caird, "Fundamental Ideas," II., 36.

mitted suicide by drowning. But many more still have so overeaten themselves that we may say that they digged graves for themselves with their teeth. Jesus will not have us starve and abuse our bodies, as if they were step-children to whom life and the joy of it were to be grudged. Nor will He allow us to feed full these bodies of ours, as if we were no better than cattle in a pen ripening for a profitable market. He will have us live simply so that we may live well.

(d) The 'Bread of Life,' a Simple and Wholesome Faith.

Will it be an extravagance now if we turn aside and read ourselves a warning from our Lord's word against luxuries in the spiritual world?

A luxury is some superfluity which comes pretending to satisfy a need, a something which is really useless, and, as well, expensive and hurtful. One of our essayists declared that "all the ostentation of our grandees is just like a train, of no use in the world, but horribly cumbersome and incommodious."² Why fashion should decree such a thing as a "train" is beyond explanation. There are also "trains" in the religious life, luxuries that are "of no use in the world, but horribly cumbersome and incommodious." There are luxuries in the religious life which assume the importance of necessities, which are at once expensive and hurtful and needless. The religious needs of man are not easily, but they are simply satisfied, just as we may say that bodily health is not easily but simply attained. If the soul is to be in spiritual health, it is needful that we avoid spiritual luxuries.

In this land there is at the present moment a large, and perhaps an increasing number of Christians who are enamoured of ritual and aesthetic elaboration in worship. Now the right doctrine about ritual in worship, as I venture to think, is one which we can easily deduce from the petition about bread. We saw that it was not right and that it was not possible to do without bread. We saw also that it was neither right nor possible to live for bread alone. In respect of ritual, therefore, we may say that they are wrong who in an extravagant puritanism demand that there should be no

² Cowley, "Of Greatness."

ritual, and they are also wrong who run to the other extreme and insist that ritual should be nursed and elaborated as if ceremony were the be-all and the end-all of worship. There must be a certain amount of ceremony in our public worship, but the machinery of our service should be unobtrusive and chaste—its glitter should not blind us and its rattle should not deafen us to higher things. In worship, as in ordinary alimentation, we must avoid both gluttony and starvation. It is most devoutly to be wished that we could soon reach the wisdom that Jesus taught the world. His holy sanity would save us from the brawlings and antics of the extremists, from those, on the one hand, who think that worship is impossible without vestments blazing like Aurora and coloured like Iris, without clouds of incense and forests of candles, and from those, on the other hand, who think that any lawless enthusiasm, any uncouth, hugger-mugger order, or any old barn of a building is good enough for the holiest transaction of our days.

Another thing for consideration is the place of emotion in our religion. As I understand things, we can have no religion at all without a very high emotion. But a religion may be all emotion, and a religion run riot in emotion is like a body afflicted with chorea. How could any man come to see and taste the love of God in Christ, how could any man feel the tenderness of that pleading which the Holy Spirit exercises so patiently with the hardness of our hearts, how could any man have even a dim apprehension of the ennoblement and the usefulness of that new life which God has offered us in Christ, without feeling a thrill of high and cleansing emotion? A religion without wings, without a rapture of joy and trust, seems to me to be as unthinkable as Spring without bursting buds and singing birds. But, on the other hand, there may be a tarantula madness in the religious world, a sort of emotional corroborree, a carnival of feeling divorced from knowledge and character, which can be very unwholesome, which in the past has done infinite hurt to the religious life. I speak as one who loves the gospel, as one who prays for a great revival of evangelical religion. But I remember that in days of renewed religious impression we have known a maenadic licence and licentiousness which were baleful to the interests of true religion and libellous on the name of Christ. We are

simply trying to make our religion live on unwholesome luxuries if we feel that we cannot preach the gospel but in the heavy air of a packed theatre, if we cannot begin to rescue the perishing without the aid of a guarantee fund, a brass band and a committee of 'the best people in the town,' and if our gospel enthusiasm languishes without the stimulus of an *outré* preaching which moves us one moment to tears and the next to laughter. We ought not to leave the gospel to the mercy of mob passion and the nervous exaltation of crowds. I do not want to say the least word of disrespect for any ministry which may be doing God's work in the world. But, for myself, I wish to remember that our Lord taught us to pray for bread, that He taught us that no side of our nature is to be suppressed, and that no side of our nature is to be hypertrophied or distressed with luxuries. There cannot be a religion without emotion, but to make religion all excitement and dithyramb is unhealthy, dangerous, like all effort at living on luxuries.

(e) The Sacramental Character of all Life.

The conclusion to which all our discussion has been tending is that the whole of our life is sacramental. If we are going to use the word 'sacrament' at all—it is not a New Testament word—there is evident wisdom in defining a sacrament as "an ordinance instituted by Christ." We are compelled to make some rule like this if we are to avoid endless and profitless debates, which swallow up all our capital of time and strength and bring in no dividend whatever. We wish to avoid the critics of the high hand who would bare the body of the New Testament teaching and leave it little else than dry, crumbling bones. And we are equally anxious to avoid the enthusiasts of the High Church, who would like to smother that same body with all manner of flashy and cheap gew-gaws. There are scholars, like Weinel, who declares that Jesus "knew no sacraments, that He did not keep up the baptism of John, that the Supper was to Him at the highest a foretelling of His death."¹ On the other hand we could name champions of high churchism among the Anglicans who put forward the

¹ Weinel, "N. T. Theol.," 79.

astounding claim that Jesus aimed at a society with solemn ceremonies, with a divine sanction attaching to its decisions, with a hierarchy to keep it from going wrong.² The Roman Catholic Church has fixed the number of sacraments at seven. There are evidently extravagances on both sides, the extremes of the one side ever tending by an inevitable reaction to make the extravagances of the other side more extravagant. We adhere to the simple principle that Jesus instituted two sacraments. If we set aside that simple rule, and there is nothing which imperatively forbids our so doing, there is no reason in saying that the sacraments are seven, or seventy-seven. Everything, then, we must say, is a sacrament, symbol of God and sustenance of the divine life in the soul.

The error of the sacramentarians is a curious one. The one damaging criticism of sacramentarianism, if we may put it so, is that it is either too much or not enough. It either goes too far in the direction of materialism or it does not go far enough. The sacramentarians go far too far when they say that the muttering of any formula by priestly lips has any power to transform a piece of bread into the real body of our Lord, or that the deglutition and digestion of such a crumb can have any power to cleanse the soul and quicken in it a divine life. But, on the other hand, the sacramentarians do not go far enough if they say that only in the consecrated wafer is there a sacrament of bread. Every piece of bread is sacramental. All bread comes from God to lead us back to Him. To the better sight of Jesus all the world is rich with God's tokens. Every need of our body and every toil of our days may be an usher to bring us into His presence, and a tutor to show us how we can honour Him. Our bodies are no vile pens—they are temples of God, and as temples they have to be presented to Him. Our daily needs, physical as well as spiritual, are the daily reminders that there is a God who satisfies men's mouths with good things and blesses their souls with salvation. Men must pray evermore for the daily bread, and along with that bread which sustains the body they must ask for the Bread of Life which came down from heaven, of which if a man eat he shall hunger no more.

² Cf. Tyrrell, "Christianity at the Cross-roads," 217.

CHAPTER VII.

THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

Matt. 6, 12. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

I. TRESPASSES AND DEBTS.

John Ruskin tells us in his "Letters to the Clergy" that for a long time he was prevented from writing upon the present clause of the Lord's Prayer by his sorrowful sense of the hopelessness of the clergyman's task. He regarded it as a doomed endeavour that a preacher should be trying to teach people to love their enemies when the whole energies of ordinary worshippers in churches are "devoted to swindling their friends." Ruskin goes on to note certain facts of our age which many have observed and lamented. People have lost all consciousness of unworth. They are well-educated, comfortable, jaunty, with no sense of anything lacking. People are unable to say, "I have sinned against God." It would not be the least way hard to adduce long testimonies to show that clear-eyed and serious observers have been appalled at the deliberate, almost perky, sort of self-satisfaction shown by the common man. Prin. Forsyth says, "Whatever may be the causes, the lay mind becomes only too ready to intepret sin in a softer light than God's, and to see it only under the pity of a Lord to whom judgment is quite a strange task, and who forgives all because He knows all."¹ To this we may add the testimony of Dr. Denney—"A generation trained upon natural science is apt to extenuate sin, to ascribe it to heredity, to environment, to irresistible natural impulses which will be outgrown and had best be forgotten: it is not thought of as creating a responsibility which must be faced as all it is before the weight can be lifted from the conscience. As against all such dispositions the New Testament and the Christian consciousness support Anselm when he says,

¹ "Person and Place of Jesus Christ," 13.

'Nondum considerasti quanti ponderis sit peccatum.'"¹

This common and growing sense of self-sufficiency, Ruskin thinks, is due, among other things, to the fact that "the fine and inaccurate word 'trespasses' is so often used instead of the simple and accurate one, 'debts.'"

Mr. Ruskin's opinions were vehement, and they were generally announced with great force and directness. In the present instance his language does not seem to be without justification. 'Trespasses' is a mild, innocuous word, and 'debts' is a stern, challenging word. If undischarged debts were alleged against any ordinary man, the indictment, if false, would drive him all but mad with anger and resentment, and, if true, would humble him to the lowest. In 'debts' there is a sting of reproach which we do not feel in 'trespasses.' The avoidance of trespasses is a virtue which is only negative and passive. To be innocent of trespasses involves no more than sitting still and doing nothing. But we have to remember that 'debt' and 'duty' are words sprung from the same root, and the discharge of our debts is nothing less arduous than the performance of the whole round of our duties.

Further, the avoidance of trespasses is an ideal founded on the model of the Old Testament virtues. The Old Testament in its Decalogue uttered and reiterated its formula, "Thou shalt not. . . ." To keep off the forbidden ground is to avoid trespasses. But in the New Testament we find a greater and more exacting type of goodness, greater, because it has cut itself off from such an elementary thing as trading in negations, and more exacting, because it has replaced the vexatious multiplication of negatives by one time-long, heaven-high, world-wide "Thou shalt." Our debt in one word is obedience to the command of Christ, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy soul, and thy neighbour as thyself."

'Trespasses,' in a word, is the mild, exculpatory term, while 'debts' is the stern, uneasy, incriminating word. And more, 'debts' is the accurate translation of the Greek word. So, on every ground, it were wise to drop the elegant and inaccurate 'trespasses' and to use only the illuminating and mordant 'debts.'

¹ "Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation," 74.

II. DEBTS AND SINS.

But we need to enter a caveat here. As against 'trespasses,' the better word is 'debts.' But 'debts' itself is not unexceptionable. Almost all language is necessarily defective in the description of spiritual things. Figures carried over into the spiritual from the physical or the commercial world may be helpful vehicles of thought and speech only if we correct them by a vivid sense of their original reference and limitation. 'Debts' in the spiritual world would be a quite inadequate word if we cut down our idea to the level of sums of money which a merchant owes for goods received. To pay this latter sort of debt must in every instance make a man poorer. But, by a happy paradox, to pay the debt which we owe to God is the one way to enrichment, and to withhold our duty from God is the one way to shameful penury. Besides, the debt owed by a merchant for goods received is paid and cancelled, no matter whether the discharge is made by the debtor himself or by some other person on his account. But with regard to my moral obligations, neither can I myself repudiate them, nor can any friendly person undertake them on my behalf. In the moral world every man *per se* must meet his liabilities—one cannot be good by proxy. And, finally, if we were to press the word 'debts' too sorely we might reach the view that a person need have no moral or religious solidarity with Jesus in order to benefit by His sacrifice. If I am bankrupt and a philanthropic person comes forward and pays off my creditors, that completes the transaction, and I, who was the person in debt and difficulty, have done nothing and need do nothing. Of course, everybody knows, theories of the atonement are many and amazing, but it would be a surprise to hear of any theorist now who maintained that a sinner can enjoy the redemption purchased by Christ without some definite act of faith and self-surrender, without being in some way united to Christ. It is as evident as the water in the sea that there must be two items in the redeeming transaction, first of all, the high-priestly sacrifice which Christ offered, and, secondly, the appropriation of the great discharge by the faith of the sinner.

A sentence from Luther's "Freedom of a Christian Man" will put the issue in a clearer light. "Since Christ is God and man, and since He has never sinned and His holiness

is unconquerable, eternal and almighty, if He makes the sins of believing souls His own by their bridal-ring, *i.e.*, by their faith, and if He acts none otherwise than as if He Himself had committed these sins, it follows that these sins must be swallowed and drowned." There must be the "bridal-ring," the faith of the believer. It is this last element which makes my salvation too intimate and personal between me and Christ to be described by the parable of an opulent friend who comes forward and signs a handsome cheque so that some hopeless debtor may be freed from his embarrassments.

We shall best understand the scope of the word 'debts' if we remember that in the parallel passage in Luke the word 'sins' is used instead of 'debts.' What we have to think of, therefore, is not anything like a person failing to discharge his money obligations to another person. It is something deeper. It is sin, the whole dark business of moral evil, that we have to think about. It is the mutiny of the creature against the Creator. It is the frustration of God's purpose by those who were created and commissioned to be the agents of that purpose. It is the miscarriage of God's plan owing to the default of those whom God designed to bless by that very plan.

III. SIN IN THEORY.

We have no time, and we have little need, to attempt any exhaustive discussion of the theory of sin. Theology has to deal with sin in a laboratory and lecture-room fashion. It is not a light, nor a short, nor an easy task that theology enters upon in the definition and discussion of sin. In the first place, there must be no tampering with the idea of God so as to make Him in any sense responsible for sin, and, in the second place, there must be no tampering with the idea of sin, no attempt to water down that sternness with which both conscience and revelation speak of sin. Theology has often made her task easy by succumbing to "the temptation to extenuate the idea of evil,"¹ or by making God just a little less than the absolute holiness, just as we saw apologists trying to make the problem of Pro-

¹ Liddon, "Some Elements of Religion," 135.

vidence a little easier by making God less than the Almighty. But if our theology juggles with the terms of the problem, then that is no more an attempt to solve the problem, but an attempt to avoid it and to create an easier problem for our own convenience.

(a) Sin in Theology and in Religion.

The first difficulty which the theologian has to face—a difficulty which never emerges in the actual practice of the holy life—is the definition of sin. Theology must give a definition of sin. But a man may writhe under sin, may be painfully aware of its presence and its havoc, may find infinite peace and triumph through the cross of Christ, without defining, or wanting to define, the curse that once tormented him. Theology, again, is very much interested in the origin of sin. But religion seems to have as little need for a history of the origin of sin as it has need for a definition of sin. Theology is worried about how sin came in—religion is supremely concerned with how sin is to be got out. Wernle has, for once, our entire approval when he says “that the whole psychology of sin is a symptom of disease: the healthy man does not go poking and prying into sin; he drives it out.” Further, theology is greatly interested in the *nuances* of the idea of sin as these may be seen in a fairly long list of words both in Hebrew and in Greek. Religion is not much interested in nomenclature, in meanings and shades of meanings. The concern of religion is with the one black fact which lies behind all the words, with that one tragic thing which all the words with all their pictorial vividness fail to describe adequately.

(b) The Definition of Sin.

The definition of sin is sometimes given in reference to God's law, and sometimes in reference to God's love. The Westminster divines in their Shorter Catechism say that “sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of the law of God.” J. Mueller declared that sin is “a declension from the love of God to the gratification of self.” In scripture sin is called ‘enmity to God’ (Rom. 8, 7), and ‘lawlessness’ (John 3, 4). Paul in the Galatians (3, 32), and in the Romans (chapp. 1-2), dwells on the universal conscious-

ness of sin, and the presentiment in all hearts that there is a dire penalty to be paid.

But when we leave these plain statements we find ourselves face to face with a series of difficulties which all down the ages have perplexed the acutest minds. The problem of moral evil was not created by Christianity, and the problem which baffled the pre-Christian sages is still here, challenging and mocking the most ingenious modern thought. How, we may ask, for instance, did sin ever manage to lay hold upon a nature once created in the image of God? The insuperable difficulty in answering this theological question is to find some solution which will avoid the odium of putting the blame for sin on God Himself. If we find an explanation of sin in the sinister presence and activities of the devil, this does not remove the difficulty—it only pushes it back to an earlier stage. Satan himself needs to be explained, not only in character, but in origin. Besides, it is not easy to understand how Satan could have any power at all over a nature which was supposed to have been made perfect in the image of God. Or again, if we maintain that there is in man a “freedom of indifference,” that man has an absolute liberty as between moral alternatives, even then we do not seem to find ourselves in any happier case. If there be such an equipoise between good and evil, then some agent or motive outside of man’s will must depress the balance when it comes down either on the side of good or evil. In this way the act which chooses the good or the evil would not be a man’s own act, and therefore it would be beyond all distinction of moral good and evil.

Again, if we try to run up sin to a source in the flesh, in man’s sensuous nature, it is very difficult to see how God can be contracted out of the schedule of blame. The conclusion can hardly be avoided that He who made man must be held responsible for all that is in man, even for the prevalence of the flesh over the spirit—if it be true that the flesh invariably humbles the spirit. This is the sort of argument which the poet Burns dared to use “in the prospect of death”:

If I have wandered in those paths
Of life I ought to shun,
As something loudly in my breast
Remonstrates I have done,

Thou knowest that Thou hast formed me
 With passions wild and strong,
 And listening to their witching voice
 Hath often led me wrong.

Or if, finally, we say that sin is merely negation and appearance in the world-development, as the pantheists declare, or if we say with some moderns, that evil is only good in the making, still we do not seem to have got our feet clear of the difficulties. We are maintaining that sin is necessarily ordained in the divine order of the world, and that is just the same as saying that sin is no longer sin. The unsophisticated moral conscience, along with the direct statement and implication of scripture, is offended by both of these latter explanations.

(c) The Fall.

Leaving these abstract argumentations we may seek for some surer ground of explanation in history. We may go back to the first chapter of Genesis—if we are still hardy enough to regard that as history—and we may try to build up some practical theory of the origin of sin on the basis of that old story. Unfortunately, we find that when we have arrived in the Garden of Eden we are not in a *milieu* of rest and illumination, but in the very vortex of controversy and distress. The story of the fall is reckoned by the rationalists as a myth, or as an allegorical representation of the passing of the Golden Age, or as the transition from instinct to moral choice, or as the hurtful consequence of the foolish ambition that aspires too highly.

But, supposing that we pass by the naive elements in the Eden story, the forbidden fruit and the talking snake, we have still a long list of difficulties to be faced. If Adam could sin, and if he did sin, how did that make us sinners? Must we, generation after generation, go to prison and be loaded with a convict's shame because of the felony of our remotest ancestor?

The agitation of such questions carries us back to the time of Paul himself. The apostle (Rom. 5, 12 ff.) looks upon Adam and Jesus as the founders of two contrasting and diverging lines. From Adam came death, and from Jesus came life. But, in spite of this view, which, of course, was well enough known to the primitive church, opinion

regarding the exact effect of the Fall upon human nature remained for a time quite fluid. The Alexandrians, as against the Gnostics and the Manicheans, were still able to maintain the inherent honour and nobility of man's nature. In the West, Tertullian, with his dark, turbulent mind and his turgid oratory, upheld something like the orthodox doctrine about human nature, *tradux animae et tradux peccati*. But the rather fluid opinion was hardened into stiff dogma by the furious disputes that raged around the teaching of Pelagius. At the beginning of the fifth century, Pelagius held that human nature and its freedom had been little injured by the Fall, that the will of the individual was unprejudiced by repeated surrenders to evil, and that man by his own power could, and ought to, find peace with God. The logical conclusion of this view, although Pelagius himself hesitated to follow out his own logic to its bitter end, is that in the great drama of our salvation Christ is quite a superfluous figure.

Against this Pelagian view, Augustine contended for man's total impotence to live the Christian life of himself. And, in order to save God from the blame of man's sin, Augustine taught the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity. This Augustinian doctrine became the church's orthodoxy. Like Pelagianism, it is a view which can be overdriven, and it is possible on Augustinian principles to make man's case so desperate as to be beyond the power of God Himself. Probably Augustine's view was never looked on as being unexceptionable. But, at any rate, the common Christian consciousness felt that Augustine had dealt far more adequately with the gravity of the situation than Pelagius. Yet if the words of a recent writer be accurate, that, while "the doctrine of the Fall and Original Sin insists on the generic aspect of evil, Pelagianism emphasises the side of the individual responsibility,"¹ it is clear that there are elements in Pelagianism which are not without value.

Of course, the weakness of the Pelagian position lies on the surface. But it is not difficult to see that the position of Augustine bristles with difficulties. Adam is treated as being a universal, generic representative of mankind. But

¹ Tenant, "The Origin of Sin," 15.

by whose suffrage or appointment does he fill that office? By the very nature of the case, it could not be by the election of those whose happiness was to be so profoundly prejudiced by Adam's lapse. Was it the arbitrary arrangement of God? Was Adam looked upon by God as the typical man, and what right could there be in considering that Adam had done what all men would do in the like circumstances? For himself, Augustine was content to say that all men were seminally present in Adam when he sinned, and so all men became heirs to the mischief which Adam wrought upon human nature. Pelagius demurred to this view of total corruption, urging the objection which must occur to every mind, that guilt cannot be thought of as anterior to a definite moral determination of the will. A little further examination, and we begin to assert that if there be an inherited bias to sin, and if this proclivity be anything like irresistible, then we have here not an aggravation of the guilt of sin, but rather a great plea in mitigation of the offence. Indeed, it is easy to go a step further in the way of critical objection and to ask if it is in any sense possible for the moral qualities of men to be transmitted to their descendants.²

(d) Overwhelming Difficulties of the Theory of Sin.

We may say that the whole theoretical treatment of sin is surrounded by difficulties that are superlative, if not quite insuperable. It seems the easiest thing in the world, as we have already noticed, to advance objections against Augustine, but it is doubtful if the world has ever seen, or can ever hope to see, anything better in regard to the doctrine of sin than the teaching of Augustine. Augustine, at any rate, does justice to the fact that man ever feels incapable of doing the thing that he approves and desires. Augustine does justice to the organic unity of the race, and to the union of solidarity which links the saved with the Saviour. And we can say, further, that always as at the time of the Reformation, when religion became purer, more ethical and personal, more regulative in the lives of men, it has been found necessary to go back to Augustine for the

² Caird, "Fundamental Ideas," I., 207.

adequate expression of the deepest feelings of the heart, and for the worthy description of the purpose and the grace of God. It would not be very difficult to prove that when experience is shallow men may easily turn to Pelagianism and to Socinianism, but when men know their hearts truly, when they begin to see the malignancy of their disease and the exceeding difficulty of its cure, then they drop the acquired speech of Pelagius and Arminius and Socinus, and they go back to Augustine as to the mother-tongue of the soul, to the only language which can give utterance and ease to the heart.

(e) Conditions which a True View of Sin must Satisfy.

Here we must leave the theoretical treatment of our subject, with the unavoidable feeling that we are leaving it in a very unsatisfactory state. Dr. Denney indeed tells us quite bluntly that "we have no right to assume that the origin of sin will ever be understood—in other words, that we shall discover the rationale of the irrational, or that we shall be able to resolve the ethical into unethicial or infra-ethical elements, and so get rid of the specifically ethical problems which it presents."¹ As a matter of fact, it has been found impossible to state any theory of sin which will satisfy even a reasonable proportion of Christian men. One may hold that Augustine has done better than any, but it is notorious that Augustine does not carry the assent of all those whose assent is worth having. We do not know the final, unobjectionable doctrine on this matter. All the length that we can go is to lay down the conditions which any acceptable theory must satisfy—and that is a thing quite worth noticing and remembering. Firstly, the character of God must not be sacrificed. We must not tamper with His holiness in order that there may be a smooth run-through for our speculations. He must not be made in the remotest degree responsible for sin. To lower the idea of God's perfect holiness and to make Him in some roundabout way answerable for sin, or at least tolerant of sin, may be a way to intellectual relief, but it is certainly the way to intolerable religious burden. Secondly, our theory must do justice to conscience. On one point conscience speaks with

¹ "Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation," 189.

an unequivocal voice and an unmistakable accent. Sin is a thing that *ought not to be*. *Sin is Guilt*,¹ and conscience makes us feel poignantly that it is we ourselves who are responsible for the maiming and the darkening of our lives. Any theory, therefore, that makes sin a necessary stage in the culture of the race must be condemned in the name of a good conscience. We need not here enter upon qualifications. The evolution of ethics is to most people a bewildered subject, and in the meantime we must wait to see if some one can produce a not outrageous formulation of the evolution of conscience. The one great difficulty which the evolutionary philosophers have to face is just that conscience has always been ahead, miles ahead, if we may speak colloquially, of the race's practice. No evolutionary theory of morals has yet been able to explain to us why the world always knew better than it acted. Every theory, in the third place, which wishes consideration must do justice to the statements of scripture. This is a condition which resumes and implies both the former conditions, for if a theory is true to scripture it cannot but be faithful to God and conscience. Scripture is very clear about sin—it is “essentially a thing against which an annihilating sentence of God lies.”² And, to sum all up, no theory of sin would be entitled to respect that made Paul's deliverance, “The wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6, 23), either an improbable or an unfair statement.

IV. SIN IN FACT.

We may now leave the laboratory and the lecture-room and the study. We go out now to take stock of men in the practical life, men flushed with life's endeavours, not men sicklied with thought. We go out now to see the big world which is too busy with its insistent tasks to have any time for speculation and brass-instrument experiment.

No matter how jaunty we be, how warmed outwardly by sunshine and inwardly by hope, yet sooner or later the revealing day comes when we have to see the misery and the failure of life. The flesh may have but one thorn, but the inevitable day, when it comes, seems to robe the soul in a

¹ Seeberg, “Grundwahrheiten d. Chr. Relig.,” 93.

² Denney, “Christian Doc. of Recon.,” 210.

garment of thorns. We know man's dread of penalty, his crying and struggling to get ease from the burden that lies so chokingly on his heart. We are brought back again into the chamber where man writhes in the anguish of his unworth, where the very men whom the world will one day learn to call its saints are wringing their hands, confessing their vileness, and agonising in prayer for relief from the burning pain in their bosoms. We are listening again to the Old Testament penitent who cried out, "Against Thee, Thee only have I sinned. Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean. Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow." We are back again with the apostle of the New Testament, and we are hearing his distressed soul crying out, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?"

Now-a-days when we catch the anguish of men like Paul, or hear the despair of men under conviction of sin, we look upon these things as freaks in psychology to be written up and tabulated in text-books and philosophical magazines, like the phenomena of double personality and automatic writing. When we read about the torments through which Augustine and Luther and Bunyan had to pass before the peace of God filled their hearts, we look upon these experiences with a sort of half-amused regard, with something like the attention which we give to the tricks and the antics credited to a 'poltergeist.' We really have reached the stage of beholding and discussing those soul-agonies with that detached, professional interest which actuaries and insurance companies show in the awful statistics of disease and death. There have been preachers in our own day who steeped themselves in the thought of the Puritan divines, to whom the dialect of the Puritans was like a mother-tongue. They kept constantly beating on their breasts and describing themselves as miscreant and deserving of the lowest place in the world of the lost. They wrestled in terrible earnest with their hearers to convince them that, for their sins and the hardness of their hearts, they had earned the penalty which means eternal alienation from God. Now I fancy that many people have a feeling that there is a great deal of unreality in all these protestations and pleadings. The language of self-condemnation strikes the ordinary hearer or reader with a painful surprise. The performance of the confessor is bizarre—it is as if a decent

citizen, respected in his business-circle, loving and beloved in his family-circle, should insist on standing in the dock at some criminal assize, beside the murderers, ravishers, thieves and embezzlers, as if he should crown his theatrical oddity by demanding that he be doomed to penal servitude for an outrage which he had never committed, which he had never even debated in the secret chambers of his thought. Critics make great play with the fact that men will stand up in multitudes in church and confess that they are miserable sinners and that there is no health in them, and yet if any man were to single out one of those loud confessors and accuse him directly of some one of the sins which congregations confess wholesale, that critic would probably find himself in court and ultimately assessed in swingeing damages for libel.

What are we to make of these things? Is confession only a farrago of platitudes and hypocrisies? Is it all feigning and empty formality that crowds should be saying every Sabbath that they are all miserable sinners? Have we at last reached the stage of the heathen who trust in vain repetitions, no matter how meaningless be the subject of their much speaking? By no means. We have still a quick sense of reality. It is no blind or stupid routine, but a more acute and clear sense of fact that still impels men to the confession of their sins. When men become thoughtful and grow rich in the deepest experiences of life, when men become aware of life's danger and apprehensive of the deadliness of sin's taint, when men's eyes at long last are opened to the radiant ideals of life and they realise how grievously they have come short, not only in achievement and aspiration, but even in knowledge, then the result must be that they cry out their unworth before God, that they fall down and pray for the divine pardon and the renewing of life's broken glory. Sooner or later our minds are illumined. We come to know what we were made for. We know what we might have done with all the powers at our disposal and all the brilliant opportunities that life brought us. We know that we have slept when we ought to have been working, that we have turned away from the arduous and preferred the easy, that we have been content with an hour's dawdling and trifling when we might have done a whole day's honest toil, that, when with zeal and steadfastness we

might have risen to all heights of heroism and sainthood, we were not a little pleased with ourselves for our success in avoiding the lowest depths of violent crime.

It is not those who in the eyes of the world are the flagrant sinners that we hear bewailing their sins. The loudest complaints about the prevalence of sin come from those whom others deem very saintly. By an astonishing logic those of whom the world thinks very well are just those who have determined that they ought to think meanly of themselves. "Conscience, when it is very sensitive and very lofty, is more an element of suffering."¹ Yet on reflection we see that these things could never have been otherwise. The man who never lifts up his eyes will never be tormented by the far-off glory of the summits. The man who thinks in farthings will be content with a trade in farthings and a fortune in farthings. But farthings are not the denomination for the man who dreams of an enterprise which will employ and enrich whole races in its service and girdle the whole earth with its fleets. The man who has neither knowledge nor desire of holiness will never miss it in his own life, and, of course, will never be heard to mourn the lack of it. The man who has a fractional or a distorted view of holiness will be satisfied with a very diluted tincture of it in his life. The man who in any adequate way has seen the holiness of God, who has discovered what rare achievement his opportunities made possible for his talents, who perceives with clearness and pain how indolence neglected those powers and indifference despised all those opportunities, must fall prostrate with shame, for he sees the guilty disproportion between all that he is and all that he might have been.

There is a Micawber tribe in the world, always in debt, and always gay in spite of debt. There are persons so lost to all sense of honesty that they not merely continue quite happy when they find themselves unable to pay off their debts, but are actually forward to contract more debt when they know that they cannot pay, and that they do not mean to pay. But, on the other hand, there are people whose consciences are as sensitive to the shame of debt as a wound is to the rawness of the night air. There are persons who

¹ Lecky, "Map of Life," 31.

could not sleep at night if they owed a penny and left it unpaid.

One does not find the habitués of the criminal courts blushing before the public. Their effrontery is quite brazen. They cheer one another when they are led out to penal servitude, as if they were martyrs suffering in a noble cause. But there are mothers and daughters in our homes who would die with shame if they were accused, even falsely accused, of doing the things which the clients of the police-court glory in having done.

Has any man any difficulty in knowing from which of these schools he should learn of honesty and honour? Has any man the least hesitation in saying whether his character should be modelled on the Micawbers and the Sikeses of the world, or on the pattern of those who are so fearful of evil that the thinnest shadow of it upon their spirit causes them anguish.

Dr. Forsyth has called youth the *Aufklärung* period of life.¹ When we are young we generally have a jaunty sense of our own worth, a confident and simple belief in the goodness of all men, a buoyant assurance that we are equal to every task and capable of discharging every obligation. But, says Dr. Forsyth, as the years go past, we attain a *Reformation* attitude to life. The meanings of existence deepen. In the fight our self-confidence is again beaten to the ground. Our assurance wears thin. We remember actual sins that we have done, and the remembrance always burns great shame-spots on our cheeks. We remember the beckonings of the grand things, which we saw only to despise, the things to which God and the need of our world and the nature of our own souls called us. We turned away from those radiant things, and we squandered time and talent on the cheapest and most abject things. All this feeling of shame and disquiet, which the review of our days brings us, is deepened by what we learn from the example of the saints in history, and of those around us whose pure and blameless lives are the boast and the encouragement of all beholders.

Further, if we do not feel shame upon the review of life's results, it is not unkind to suggest that our insensibility has

¹ "Person and Place of Jesus Christ," 188, f.

in it something of the hardness of those chronic criminals who keep the police-court stipendiaries in employment, something of the odium of a dishonest debtor, who is happy enough while he owes and all the happier the more he owes. Something might be forgiven to youth because of its hot blood and its inexperience, but surely a grey head found in the way of folly is the world's extreme imbecility, as unnatural and shocking as a grown man trundling a go-cart and babbling baby-talk. In view of all we know about the spiritual life and those who have lived it most winsomely, we are justified in saying that the less inclination a man has to cry out against the folly of his days and the badness of his heart, the more indisputably clear it is that he ought so to cry out. He needs to see the issues of life re-illuminated under the light of eternity. He needs to see the horror of that abyss which yawns between the sorry manhood that he has and the honourable manhood which he might have had. A sinner's case is pathetic when he never discovers the shame of the things which he has gained, and his case is perfectly tragic when he never discovers the beauty and the nobility of the things that he has missed. His case is like some odd disease, which is the more ominous because it does its work of ravage without ringing any alarm-bell of pain and without any immediate interruption of life's routine. "A bad conscience induces moral paralysis. . . It impairs the power to repent, so that the more we need to sorrow for our sin, the less sorrow is in our power."¹

V. FORGIVENESS.

(a) Jesus as Prophet and Priest, as Subject and Object of Faith.

Now, in view of all that we have been saying, the great fact to which we have now to give attention is that the gospel offers us the forgiveness of sins. This is what, indeed, has made it The Gospel, the message that spoke savingly and thrillingly to man's deepest needs, that rescued him from despair, that changed his degradation to honour, that started him again, hopeful and strong, in the way of truth and goodness. Since the world has been visited by Christ it is true that "there is nothing which a man might

¹ Denney, "Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation," 190.

have been which he may not yet be.”² God has extended to men a full and a free forgiveness. The Roman Catholic system, perhaps with the purpose, certainly with the result of aggrandising the church and her priests, has declared that the forgiveness of sins is ever incomplete—patients are dismissed from the divine house of healing not “cured” but only “helped.” Forgiveness needs to be eked out with good deeds and the purgation of another world. It seems difficult to say whether this doctrine mocks more the sense of scripture or the hope of the human heart. Man’s need was for a full forgiveness—he does not want a patch for his blindness, he wants new sight. He does not wish to be a ticket-of-leave man, but a free man. Man expected a full pardon from God, and he needed a full pardon, and it is that sort of pardon which the Gospel offers and experience ratifies.

Looking at the facts without prejudice, the facts of two millenniums of our history, as well as at the facts of our present-day experience, it seems quite unnecessary to set up any apologetic for Jesus. There is little need to defend Him and His ministry from the aspersions of those critics who tell us that He is an outworn-fashion of antiquity, and that He and His age and its ill-informed views have ceased to help or to interest our enlightened epoch. Leaving out all conjecture, and having regard to nothing but facts, we may declare that if it were a *service* to lift up our race from despair and to bring back again the fearful sons of men into the joyous household of God, if it were an *honour* to wash away all the stain that disfigured human character and to answer the heart’s cry for rescue and purifying, if it were a *glory* to make the licentious chaste and the ribald holy, to swing over the bias of human nature from the utterly worthless to the utterly worthy, then that praise is all His, and it can never belong to any other but to Him. He has done for us what we never could have done for ourselves. He has done what no other would ever have attempted. And it has to be remembered that this is not the starting-point in some promising hypothesis—it is the basal, immovable fact of the world’s religious history. “There is none other name in heaven or earth by which we

² Burroughs, “Valley of Decision,” 101.

must be saved." (Acts 4, 12). In Him "we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the richness of his grace." (Eph. 1, 7). "Him hath God exalted to be a prince and a Saviour for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins." (Acts 5, 31).

Now to speak in this way is to ignore, or to despise, the contentions made so confidently by many modern writers on the life of Jesus. Abelard long ago began speaking of Jesus as a Prophet. But in recent days it has been a wide if not a prevalent fashion to speak of Jesus as only a Prophet. The vogue among the moderns is to unload all their compliments on the Peasant-sage of Galilee, and the more glowing be the encomiums on the Man of Nazareth, the more scathing are the references to Paul and the mischief which he wrought by turning the Prophet into a Priest, by making Jesus into the Object of faith instead of keeping Him the exemplary Subject of faith. Jesus, it is asserted, demanded faith in God, not faith in Himself. It is declared that the most noteworthy fact in Jesus' way of forgiving sins was that He conditioned it on no sacrifice, no penance, no satisfaction whatever that the sinner or his substitute might offer, but, as He Himself declares it to be God's practice, He pardons freely, out of hand, whenever men confess and repent.

Of course, this controversy ranges over a very wide field. But it reaches its burning centre in one text, "No man knoweth the Son save the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and He to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." (Matt. 11, 27). Certain literary devices have been adopted by some critics to get rid of the "Johannine" character of this verse. Others try to give the words a tame meaning by following, say, the Syriac translation rather than the Greek version of the original Aramaic. Others sweep away the whole orthodox contention with one impatient statement—Jesus claimed no metaphysical relation to God and He maintained no attitude to God which other men were not invited to share with Him.

Various obvious considerations prevent us at the moment from going into this matter with the fulness which it deserves. But a few observations are quite essential. Leaving the Synoptists out of account for the present, it is perfectly obvious that Paul had no monopoly of the doctrine

of Christ's cosmic significance. John and Peter, and even James, are as forward as Paul to ascribe transcendent honours and divine functions to Jesus. It would surely be the most astonishingly whimsical fact in all the world's history if Jesus had come to the earth to declare a merely ethical and prophetic message, if He had chosen and trained certain men to be the heralds of "a standing ideal order of the universe,"¹ and if these very men, immediately Jesus was buried in the tomb of Joseph, began to lay all the emphasis not on the word of Jesus, which was the essential thing, but on Jesus Himself, which was the accidental thing. That way, the disciples of Jesus not only travestied His teaching but frustrated His purpose: the friends of Jesus were His worst enemies. If there be such a divorce between Jesus' idea of Himself and the disciples' idea of Him, then we need to go on to observe that we do not know where to find the time-allowance sufficient to have wrought this change, or the agents of it, or the influences which started it, and we are reduced to bafflement in our endeavour to understand the New Testament and the history of the Christian Church. It is surely more intelligent to believe that the New Testament is, in the best sense, *one* book, with one general idea of its Hero running through it from the first line of Matthew to the last line of Revelation. The only way in which we can avoid offending against our own intelligence is to maintain that at the very beginning of our Faith's history there was not merely a prophetic ministry, but a priestly ministry, not merely an exalted human personality but a divine personality coming in gracious visitation for our redemption.²

And if we come now to the gospels themselves, in spite of the confident assertions of such scholars as Jülicher and Wernle and Weinel, we can say with other interpreters, who are as competent and sincere, that "the conduct of those who sought Him, to whom He so often says, 'Thy faith hath saved thee,' is at bottom a faith in Christ, though in a most elementary form; and when Jesus afterwards presupposes a combined confession of, and praying in, His

¹ Cf. Cairns, "Christianity in the Modern World," 28, and Fairbairn, "City of God," 246.

² Denney, "Jesus and the Gospel," *passim*.

name (Matt. 10, 32; 18, 20), or when He calls on men to receive Him, or to come to Him in order to learn of Him, or allow themselves to be guided by Him, it cannot be denied that the only thing wanting here is the formal expression πιστεύειν εἰς Χριστόν, the idea and requirement of a personal trustful attachment to Him being present throughout."¹ It is perfectly true, as another eminent writer remarks, that forgiveness for the sake of Christ is not expressed in the gospels, but "it is not disputable that it is always forgiveness conditioned by faith in Jesus and repentance before His great and condescending personality, whose mighty humility the cross did but gather up and consummate. It was a forgiveness which He knew to be something peculiar to Himself."²

(b) The Nature of Forgiveness.

The point which we now reach is the nature of that forgiveness which Jesus teaches us to ask for, and which by His Person and preaching He offers and guarantees to us. In what, then, does that forgiveness consist?

Let us take a simple illustration. Suppose a merchant had in his employment a clerk who was detected embezzling the firm's money. The culprit acknowledges his fault and gives evidence of his sincere sorrow for the wrong-doing. Suppose the master says to the defaulting servant that, instead of putting him into prison, he is going to do the magnanimous thing and send him back again to his position and commit to him again his old trust. Here we would have a certain fanciful story which might help us, as far as these things go, to understand the supreme transaction. The servant had done a wrong and incurred a serious penalty. On the servant's sincere repentance, the master, who was in a position to do so, cancelled the debt which the thievish servant was unable to pay and gave him back again the confidence which the theft had forfeited. He might have "cut the loss," as the saying is, and turned the swindler out into the street, and that would have been a moderation which, with many, would have been highly

¹ Beyschlag, "N. T. Theology," I., 143. Denney, "Jesus and the Gospel," 57, ff.

² Forsyth, "Person and Place of Jesus Christ," 103. Cf. also Carnegie Simpson, "The Fast of Christ," 150.

merciful. But he did the greater, nobler, riskier thing—*He trusted again the servant who had betrayed His trust.* This is the great arresting fact. We could confidently predict what must have been the ending of such a story. "Every one who knows what it is to be forgiven knows also that forgiveness is the greatest regenerative force in the life of man."¹ The assurance that he was still trusted by the master whom he had wronged, the knowledge that in spite of all that had come and gone the master still believed in him and still expected the best from him, must have changed the embezzler into a zealous and incorruptible employee. How could any man feel that, even after default and betrayal, he was still relied upon, without becoming reliable—how could he perceive that he was still honoured without showing himself honourable?

This is the doctrine of forgiveness. Jesus has "done justice" to the moral order of the universe. He is in a position to offer and assure our forgiveness. The form of the Christian salvation as proclaimed by Paul differs from the form of it as it was declared by Jesus Himself. Paul speaks of faith where Jesus usually speaks of repentance, and of justification where Jesus speaks of forgiveness. But it needs little ingenuity to see that the salvation proclaimed in both cases is the same. On a man's true repentance, or faith, God gives him forgiveness, justifies Him for the sake of Christ. God delivers a man from the guilt and the power of his sins. God cancels the debt and the long line of the debt's consequences. We trust God, but, far more important, He trusts us. And all this transaction is unthinkable without Jesus. He alone it is that can quicken in us the repentance and He alone it is that can give us the divine assurance of our forgiveness.

God cancels the guilt and the consequences of our sin. This is a statement which we must make with some reserve and qualification. God always takes the guilt away, but not always the consequences. There are scars left upon the soul that not even God's hand can smooth away. Paul himself had a legacy of suspicions from his mad days which he could not live down—"they were afraid of him." (Acts, 9, 26). It is one of the mightiest dissuasives from sin that

¹ Denney, "Christian Doc. of Recon.," 6.

even a little "flutter," as they call dabbling in wrongdoing, may entail a weakness and a disrepute which nothing on this side of the grave can ever mend. The drunkard, or the sensualist, by a long course of ill-doing, may have so deranged his body and darkened his mind and his world, that even after repentance and forgiveness he may walk unsteadily where others go erect, and he may dwell in a world of fear and disturbance where others dwell in peace and security. No doubt it is escape from the consequences of our ill-doing that we mostly clamour for. No doubt there has been a perfect ingenuity of agonised clamour and whimper on the part of those who wished to elude the penalty in order that they might repeat the offence. "By nature," says James Hinton, "we fear suffering more than sinning."¹ God's forgiveness, it is true, does remit penalties, but the remission of penalty ought not to be the end of our striving or the theme of our rejoicing.²

The great fact in forgiveness is that God trusts us again. Sin, in the view of Jesus, is "something to be, not punished, but forgiven."³ He believes in us who had ceased to believe in ourselves. He hopes, against all the evidence, that we can do better if we take up again the old botched tasks, that we can stand now where before we fell, that we can retrieve honour exactly where we lost honour and that we can be a credit to Him exactly at the post where we were aforetime His shame. He trusts us. He is not the sort of person to bring in the police and send his erring servants to prison. He sends us back again to the old duty assuring us that He knows and believes that we shall be true to Him, and His assurance that He dares to trust us is the transforming power that makes us trustworthy. Although we have been foolish, prodigal, boon companions in every nefarious trade, and ring-leaders in every degraded adventure that could grieve our Father and slander His holy name, yet when we return to Him we are greeted with no snarling recriminations, no casting-up of old scores—we find nothing but a son's welcome, a son's place and a son's banquet. The Father cannot bargain with us as menials—He can deal with us only as sons. He dares with the magnificent

¹ "Mystery of Pain," 62.

² See Prin. Sir G. A. Smith, "The Forgiveness of Sins," 17, ff.

³ Horton, "Reconstruction," 37.

recklessness of a Father's forgiveness to restore us to our son's place in His home, and He believes that now, since we have such moving evidence of His complete confidence in us, we shall honour that sonship which in foolish days we so lightlied. This is the healing thing. This is the forgiveness which Jesus mediated, which He now offers and guarantees to the sons of men.

VI. FORGIVINGNESS THE QUALIFICATION FOR FORGIVENESS.

Jesus, we saw, made forgiveness depend on repentance, just as Paul made justification contingent on faith. It is very nearly the same thing to say that Jesus makes forgiveness depend on forgivingness. God's sons must be like Him. As He forgives, so must they. "No man dare call God Father and pray for forgiveness unless he be, like God, ever ready to forgive."¹ The connection between forgivingness and forgiveness is unique, and it must be carefully noted. Jesus makes the former essential to the latter, and not merely consequent on it. All this subject lay so heavily on His heart that after He had said Amen to His prayer, He came back to the topic which we now have under consideration, and He solemnly added, "If ye forgive men their trespasses your heavenly Father will forgive you, but if ye forgive not men their trespasses neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." (Matt. 6, 14-15). He enlarged and emphasised this doctrine in two striking parables, "The Two Debtors," (Luke, 7, 41, ff) and "The Unforgiving Debtor," (Matt. 18, 23, ff).

It is a very remarkable circumstance that while Jesus insisted that men ought to pray He said very little about the subjects that prayer should deal with. But He evidently expected that in every prayer there would be a petition for forgiveness. And very clearly He thought it was barren labour to offer up the essential prayer for forgiveness unless there were, first of all, the same spirit of forgivingness in the suppliant as he expected to find in the God whom he supplicated. "When ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any; that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive,

¹ Weinell, "N. T. Theol.," 154.

neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses." (Mark, 11, 25-26).

(a) Our Attitude to God.

It is not an arbitrary proceeding when God conditions forgiveness on forgivingness. If I am maimed myself it is not very likely that I shall make a jest of my brother's deformity. If I am poor the poor man will not be my sport. If I feel that I have fallen far short of my powers and opportunities, if I know that I have been mean when I could have been generous, that I have been dastard when I might have been brave, and if I clamour for God's decree of oblivion, for the renewal of my broken life and the re-starting under some sure convoy of my bungled venture, how can I, how dare I be stiff against any brother of mine who has come short of his duty to me by inches, when I have come short of my duty to God by leagues?

God does not behave toward us like a fond mother who will thrust her kisses and her forgiveness on a child still frowning in a bad temper and desirous of nothing so little as the mother proffered favour. God's forgiveness would be of no value whatever to those who did not painfully feel the need of it. God cannot deal with men by whip and cudgel. He must, unless He proposes to remake the universe, deal with men as with moral agents. God cannot grant forgiveness to, or force the new opportunity on any, except those who feel acutely that they have shamefully wasted the old opportunities; and the one clear evidence that we can give of sorrow for the past and desire of renewal is that we are ready to treat others in the same spirit, if not to the same lengths, as we would have God treat us. If we are so obdurate to others, is not that the evidence of the blindness of our hearts, of our insensibility to the dwarfing and the shame of our lives, in a word, of our unfitness to receive God's forgiveness?

(b) Our Attitude to our Fellows.

Men ought to look carefully at the attitude which they assume toward their fellow-men, for that attitude is always declaratory of a man's character. The corollary of piety is respect for our brothers. The offspring of impiety is

contempt for our neighbours. It is said that there are people who reserve their superlative hate for those to whom they are most obliged. If this were true it would be the ghastliest principle in the code of darkness, a fit companion cynicism for the other, *odisse quem laeseris*. These two principles represent a very riot of confusion, a fiend's inversion of all that is fit and fair. If a man hates his helpers and his victims he has already begun to hate and despise the God who loves him as a Father, and such a man has graduated with honours in the college of evil.

Again there are those who hasten to hunt down and oppress all who owe them a fraction of a penny, who, with a Shylock greed, demand eye for eye and tooth for tooth. They are in the unwholesome and unreasonable state of mind which remembers the half-pence owing and forgets the pounds owed. They do not forgive, and so they are disfranchised automatically, outside the constituency of God's forgiveness.

And, lastly, there are the cynics who hold all men subjects for scorn. There was the witty Frenchman who held that all our virtues are only vices in disguise. There are plenty who are not clever enough to speak the Frenchman's wit, but wicked enough to live on his poor plan. They will not pity men, for all men are such shallow popinjays. They will help nobody, for that would only prolong the miserable farce of our race's existence. They are as bitter as Timon of Athens who before he cut down a worthless tree invited his fellow-citizens to come forward and make use of the wretched stump to hang themselves. Now the truth is that this temper of sullen hate is blasphemy against God. It is to be hopeless where God is confident. It is to despise what God made and what God values. It is to call common and unclean that for which Christ died.

If I feel the need of forgiveness and pray for pardon, that involves a new attitude to God. I am under compulsion to take that view of myself which God has, and to start my life again as His redeemed and trusted child. But, in the second place, it involves a new attitude to my neighbours. I must take God's estimate of my brothers, and I must hope and work and suffer so that all men may share in the redemption, as Christ Himself worked and suffered so that there might be a redemption to share. A right relation to

God is impossible without a right relation to men. To share God's mind in this matter is to have all men in the highest esteem, as honoured, or at least, as honourable, as holy, or, at least, as made for and destined to holiness.

CHAPTER VIII.

TEMPTATION.

Matt. 6, 13. And lead us not into temptation.

I. FORGIVENESS OF SIN, IN ORDER TO ITS CONQUEST.

In some quarters there has been displayed a painful and misguided ingenuity in discovering connections between the various clauses of the Lord's Prayer. Yet, however far-fetched may appear those attempts to give a packing-room neatness to the petitions, it must strike every observer as significant that the present petition for delivery from temptation should come immediately after the petition for the forgiveness of sins. He must be unusually dull who does not see the force of crying out, "Lead us not into temptation," immediately after we have said, "Forgive us our sins." The truth is that God cleanses us in order that we may remain clean. He forgives us our debts, but certainly not that, like confirmed profligates, we may go out and run into debt again. It is an affront to God if we think that we can magnify His forgiving grace by piling up debts on which He may have the pleasure of exercising His divine prerogative of pardon. This is a great fact, and we may indulge ourselves in the joy of painting it with a full brush on a large canvas. We may say that God forgives us more and more in order that we may need His forgiveness less and less. When God says to any of His penitent children, "Thy sins are forgiven thee," He always adds, "Go in peace, and sin no more." Surely God means what he says! Fancy what a scoundrel a man would be if he could actually trade on the love of his mother! Fancy what a poltroon a man would be if he could exploit the patriotism of his brother, let him go to the hardness and the wounding and the death of the trenches, while he himself stayed at home and enjoyed all the ignoble ease and luxury arising out of a profiteer's income! Fancy what a frigid and calculated insult it were to God for a man to trade on God's readiness to forgive, and so make God's

pardoning mercy only a convenience for serving the devil! It is a solemnising and cleansing thing to remember that when we have prayed, "Forgive us our debts," we add, "And bring us not into temptation."

II. THE NATURE OF TEMPTATION.

The word used in the Greek, *peirasmos*, has the same double sense as the English word 'trial.' It means misfortune, and it also means the assay of our faith. It means life's vexations, its poverty, its sickness of body, its torment of mind, its frayed powers, its disappointments, its betrayals. It means also the appeal of evil things, the solicitation that there is in the very appearance of the wrong, the convincing oratory of evil agents—it means all that elaborate machinery whose finished product is the denial of God.

Men are tried by God and by Satan. Calvin declares that God tries us to test our honesty. The trials that come to us from Him are always for our good, to confirm our faith and establish our loyalty. He pushes us into the storm so that we may discover how weak we are, so that we may plead for the strength which He is able and forward to supply. The temptations that come to us from Satan are always cloaked, subtle, delivered unawares, and the object of them, under all their friendly pretence, is to decoy and destroy us.

(a) The definition of Temptation.

In connection with our present verse there are many wire-drawn distinctions to be met with in the commentators. Every word almost in our present verse has been filed and fined down to the thinnest edge of a meaning. 'Lead' may be the ordinary word of our daily acquaintance or it may be a refinement of 'leading,' such a leading as will deliver us into the power of evil. 'Temptation,' again, as we have already indicated, may be merely life's misfortunes, or it may be sin's coloured and clever device to seduce us from God. 'Evil,' to go a step beyond our present clause, may be evil in the ordinary abstract sense, or it may be evil as embodied in the sinister personality of

'The Evil One.' There is no end to such discussions, and there is little profit from taking part in them. For our present purpose it is best to cut the knot of our difficulties with one swift sword-stroke. We shall understand that by 'temptation' our Lord meant all those inward promptings and all those outward influences, or, rather, the interplay of these two, the headlong propensities of our will to follow the outward suggestion of evil, which turn us away from the divine will. Our Lord is thinking of those enemies in a man's own heart as well as the subtle, external foes who seem to find an occupation and a reward in leading poor mortals astray, in wheedling a poor woman, for instance, to swallow a lie and grasp at a forbidden pleasure, in coaxing a saintly king to do a great wrong by promising to add impunity to the lustful delight, in suggesting to a callow youth that the far country is better than his father's home, in corrupting a disciple so that he sells his Master for the paltry consideration of thirty pieces of silver. Jesus teaches us to pray that we may not be led up to the encounter with these enemies, that we may be fortified to withstand the disloyal inclinations of our own hearts, that we may be shielded from the onslaughts of those enemies of God and man who wish to endanger and break our friendship with Him.

(b) Our Lord's Temptation.

It will be remembered that, in the sequence of events as given by Matthew, our Lord, just before He spoke the words of His prayer, had Himself passed through a time of ordeal. He was tempted, and He had in His mind the fresh impression of how eloquently the evil agency could speak to men, of how brilliantly the wrong purpose could be dressed up and of how plausible the most diabolical programme could be made to appear. He had just emerged from that conflict, successful, it is true, but not happy in a success that had cost Him nothing. He had learned how arduous the conflict was, and how practised and unpitying were the adversaries of a man's soul. So, deliberately, after the agony of His own trial, He teaches us to pray, "Lead us *not* into temptation."

(c) The Varied Instruments of Temptation.

The ancients had a myth about a sea-deity called Proteus, who was very difficult of access. When any person wished to consult him he vanished in one way or another—his form changed into that of a lion or a tiger, or he disappeared in a flame of fire, in a whirling wind, or in a rushing stream. The subject of temptation offers the same difficulty to a student as the consultation of Proteus offered to the old pagan devotee. The subject is very subtle, very elusive. One hardly knows where to seek it out, where to make a beginning with it. We know what a commanding rôle temptation has played in the spiritual life of man, and yet the most laborious and the most garrulous among the systematic theologians have painfully little to say about it. In all the text-books the subject gets the curtest treatment. There is no greater surprise for the simple reader than to find how copious the theologians can be on the shadowy history of Eden and on the mysterious transactions of the Last Judgment, and how tongue-tied and helpless they all are on the subject of temptation. Yet, evidently, this is a subject of supreme importance for the spiritual life, a science whose material is everywhere and whose students are all men, a subject, clearly, upon which accurate guidance and information are matters of life and death. This apparently cavalier way of treating a great subject may be due to the inherent difficulty of the whole business. The spirit of temptation assumes so many and so baffling shapes that it always seems to escape before we have time to fix and examine it. Temptation is a look, a word, a sight, a thought—who can catch the evanescent thing? Is it any wonder, after all, that in a recent Dictionary of the Bible, in five corpulent volumes, the difficult, protean subject of temptation should be dismissed in one poor half-page, and that, even then, the treatment of temptation should be neither religious nor theological, but purely verbal?

(d) The Unvarying Object of Temptation.

Our Lord was tempted in the wilderness to do evil so that good might come of it, so that the Kingdom of God,

which was more to Jesus than His heart's blood, might be brought in with swift and imposing magnificence. Eve was tempted, and in her case the hook was baited with a promise of the knowledge and the consequence of gods. David was tempted to sin by the twin inducements of the gratification of lust and the maintenance of secrecy. Judas was tempted by the corrupting sight of a bribe acting upon the avarice of his heart. Peter and John had to resist a temptation which came to them from a court claiming deference and respect from every Jew, a temptation which endeavoured by bullying and noisy threats to make them go back upon Jesus. It is simply bewildering to think of all the tricks, the doublings, the falsehoods, the dodges which temptation can employ against men. The arguments of the Tempter run through every tone and semitone in the gamut of appeal—cooing, coaxing, quizzing, arguing, ordering, jeering, threatening. The end aimed at in all the proposals forced on our notice by the resource of the adversary is never betrayed—it is either kept out of sight altogether, or it is tricked out in some attractive disguise. But with all the perplexing and protean arguments employed, the conclusion to be reached is ever the same, to induce us to do evil, to deny God, to fling away our salvation.

(e) Temptation and the Polarity of Human Nature.

The fact that we are tempted, and that temptation is always painful, no matter whether we successfully resist it or fall helplessly before it, is evidence at once of the misery and the glory of our human nature. We are not angels—our nature is defective when we contrast it upward in the scale of God's creation. If we were angels we might say, so far as we are able to dogmatise about the nature of the angels, that we could not be tempted to sin. We are not devils—our nature is incalculably glorious when we compare it downwards. If we were devils we would need no bait at all to induce us to do evil, and when we had done the evil, which is entirely congenial to the devilish nature, we would never be visited by the least pricking of remorse. We are not angels—our nature has a defect which lays us open to moral attack and makes our safety and defence a

matter of sore hazard. We are not devils—our nature has a distinction which makes us feel that we ought not to go down before the sinful aggression, and that if we do go down our discomfiture is a matter for humiliation and tears, like the triumph of barbarism over culture, or the violation of innocence by brute lust.

A recent author defines temptation in terms of the hostility between animal impulse and the law of conscience.¹ So far as it goes, the definition is good enough. "An impulse of greater intensity but lower worth conflicts with another of higher worth but lower intensity. This is temptation. It divides the man against himself; his natural animal basis against his acquired human conscience." Man's nature, we may say, is polar. It is not dead men, it is living men who at the present moment people purgatory. Here in this very life which we are now leading we are in the intermediate state, and here and now it has to be settled whether we are to be purified up to the angels or defiled down to the devils. Here, in this present existence, we are drawn up to God and life, and we are dragged down to evil and death. We learned in the elementary chemistry which was taught us at school that a certain element has an affinity for another element, and when one of these is brought into the presence of the other they leap together swiftly and noisily to form an altogether new body. In our nature there is an affinity for God, an element which leaps out to God, which finds its rest and its new creation in Him alone. But there is another element in us which has an affinity for evil, and when this lustful element in our nature finds itself in the presence of sinful opportunity, then lust and occasion rush together and the black progeny of sin is brought forth. The purgatorial pain of our nature must last so long as these two contrary affinities war together upon the stage of our being, so long as the divine element is seeking its rest in God and the evil element striving after its satisfaction in sin. Salvation is just the touch which gives to the upward force the preponderance and the verdict. Perdition is just the aggrandisement of the downward forces which carries men away to the eternal loss. Christ's desire and office are to end this

¹ Tennant, "Origin of Evil," 119.

suspense, to secure our happiness by carrying us upward to God and giving us citizenship in that world where the power and the presence of evil suggestion are unknown.

The fact of gravitation ceases *downward*, when one has reached the central particle of the earth's mass. The force of our planet's gravitation ceases *upward* when we come to a point where the pull of the sun's mass balances the pull of the earth's. If a man could ever fall to a condition that is perfectly fiendish, all his spiritual struggle would be over—he would have reached rest *downward*. At that stage there might be with a man the defiant bearing of penalty, but the dead conscience would have no holy longings, no burning regrets, and, instead of remorse, which is the one fit garment for a fallen soul, there would be only the boasting of sinful achievements and the shameless announcement of unholy schemes. But, on the other hand, a man's struggles and fears would all cease as he rose upward to God. A man would find rest *upward* when Christ brought him to dwell where the power of God balances and cancels every force of evil. For the peace and the honour and the ennoblement of their souls men should pray oftener and more earnestly to be delivered from temptation, to be carried up to rest in that bright world where there is no law but the will of God, where there is day with no sequent darkness, song with no undertone or coda of sighing, pleasure with no reaction of regret, where God is all in all.

III. OUR ATTITUDE TO TEMPTATION.

(a) Slavish Submission.

The lowest and saddest attitude to temptation is that of slavish submission. It may not be unprofitable if at this point we direct our attention to the famous text in the epistle of James. (1, 14). "Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed." We are informed that two of the words in this text may be more accurately translated than in our version. "Drawn away" is a sort of technical term carried over from the realm of field sports. It means the art of luring away a beast from some place of security to a place of peril. The synonym which is translated "enticed" is, perhaps, to be rendered by some stronger term, by something like "dragged." At

any rate, however it may stand with the exegesis of the classical passage, there are always two stages in the life-history of those who fall before temptation, what we may call the stage of "drawing" and the stage of "dragging." Every temptation at the first solicits with the deference of a mendicant, argues with an air of benevolence and candour, offers great rewards and friendships. But when the temptation has drawn away its victim out of the place of safety into the place of danger, when the trap is sprung, or the hook is fixed, there is an end of all gentle handling and deference and fine words. The fawning tempter has now become a scowling tyrant, who drives and drags, who must be obeyed *sans phrase*.

We used to see occasionally in the streets the spectacle of a performing bear—a spectacle which produced merriment for the vacant, and affected all right-minded people with horror and shame. By some fraud, perhaps the offer of a tasty bite, the unsuspecting bruin had been lured into the trap. Till he was quite secure, there was no alarm, no noise, no advertisement of the cruel project on foot. But once the poor beast was caught fast, the ruthless captor flung away all caution and compunction. The hour of "drawing" had gone past and the hour of "dragging" had come. The captive had a ring thrust through his nose. He was taught his steps by being made to dance on hot plates. He was led about at the end of a rope. He was beaten with a stick. He was forced to wear his life out rapidly, dancing on his hind legs so as to make sport for the gaping street and gather in a copper harvest for his merciless master.

Doubtless there is a sentiment in this country strong enough and easily enough roused to prohibit such a degrading exhibition as that of a dancing bear. But we ought to spare a little of our pity from the animal world and give it to our own brothers and sisters whose case is far more pitiable than that of any animal which man ever captured and made drudge. There are thousands of our kind whom temptation once wheedled and now bullies, to whom evil once appeared gaily attractive and now appears like a grim slave-master with a raised whip, to whom the fawning evil once spoke in words of velvet softness and now growls in rasping accents of impatient command.

These are the slaves of sin, slaves with the poignant memory of having once been free, with the crushing conviction that they can never be free again, slaves who know that they must die soon with the fetters on their limbs and the whip-marks wet upon their backs, whose misery is unspeakable because they know that but for their own too easy acquiescence they need never have worn the yoke or toiled at the tasks of shame.

Nathaniel Hawthorne has told, with charming delicacy and restraint, the story of a good man's daughter who left a happy home, lured away by the lying promises that have misled so many simple ones and wrecked so many homes. After the daughter went away the mother sickened and died. Then came Thanksgiving Day, when every New England family meets in social gladness. John Inglefield's little family group gathered round the hearth, but the joy of their Thanksgiving was shadowed by two losses, one that death had brought, and another that was worse than a thousand deaths. Then the door opened—the wanderer had come back again. She sat in her mother's chair, she poured out her father's herb-tea. Her coming had restored again some measure of the joy that the home once knew, and the father fancied that now his days were to be lightened of their worst shadow. But, says the touching story, when they took down the Bible to engage in family worship, the returned wanderer went haggard. She turned to the door, and went out into the night. They heard the rumble of wheels in the distance—she was gone for ever. "Her visit to the Thanksgiving fireside was the realisation of one of those waking dreams in which the guilty soul sometimes strays back to its innocence. But sin, alas! is careful of her bond-slaves. The same power that drew Prudence Inglefield from her father's hearth would snatch a guilty soul from the gates of heaven and make its sin and its punishment alike eternal."

"Sin is careful of her bond-slaves." This is a sentence which has some of the memorable quality of holy writ. Once heard, it keeps on ringing its indisputable fact in the ear. Let a man go out into the street, and there he will see lives dishevelled, broken, dishonoured, whose cureless misery illustrates and demonstrates the truth that "sin is careful of her bond-slaves." Let any minister try to preach

the gospel, and if he find that his labour, his learning, his diligence, his prayers are all in vain, the old sentence that "sin is careful of her bond-slaves" will come again, ringing in his ears the secret of his little success. We dare not set any limit to the power of God's grace, but one is not surprised to find that there are some hardened sinners for whom ministers, and even mothers, have ceased to pray. It is fine to see the prodigals who come home. But, alas, for the prodigals who die in their misery in the far land beside the swine-trough! "Sin is careful of her bond-slaves." Where she calls them they must go. She has roped them together in one bundle of misery. She beats them and they cannot resist. Nay, they have forgotten that resistance is possible. "*Sin is careful of her bond-slaves.*"

(b) Resistance.

There is, as we have already remarked, an unfathomable subtlety about the devices of the Tempter. We have already noticed some of the protean guises in which the temptation comes to men. And now, we have to remember that if a man once falls, the Tempter is ready with his most drastic plea. The sinner has fallen *once*, he need never hope to rise again. In for a penny, in for a pound! He has taken one step along the broad road—he must follow it down to its last bitter stage, for going back is impossible. What a tremendous gain if the dupes of sin could be got to refuse this one lie of the adversary! It would be nothing short of their salvation if the fallen could only realise that resistance is possible, that resistance is hopeful, that in Christ's name resistance has again and again been successful.

The annals of the saints are long and varied, and they prove that no sinner need ever give way to resignation or desperation. No man's case is hopeless. Let a man have gone as far as he may, let him be blasphemer, sensualist, hypocrite, betrayer, devil—as far as a man can become a devil—he cannot possibly be so bad that we cannot match his badness out of the lives of the saints, out of the glorious histories of those who once were sin's captives and became God's freemen. Egypt may be impudently great and

Israel may be pitifully small, but God delivers the oppressed out of the hand of the oppressor.

During our studies we have had occasion to glance at the difficulties and the disappointments of the preacher's vocation. But when a preacher dwells on the hardships and the anxieties of his office, he is very unfair to the facts if he leaves the matter there. He ought to go on to tell, since he has thought fit to introduce his own troubles as illustrative matter, of those other experiences which come to a minister, which make him sing for joy, which give him the thrilling sensation of being engaged in the happiest and noblest work on earth. What is called 'testifying' may be a loathsome, morbid thing, an appeal whose public may differ very little from the constituency which supports "The Newgate Calendar." But that need not blind us to the fact that there is a sort of testimony which is wholesome and profitable, which is the proof that God is ever adding more and more glorious chapters to Acts of the Apostles.

The other day—after my apologetic, I may, perhaps, be pardoned for introducing the incident—a certain pastor was reminded of an old episode in his ministry. He had been all but broken-hearted by a certain member of his flock. This was a man of business, a man with a born turn for serving the public. He had style, courtesy, foresight, alertness—he was one of the best salesmen that ever offered goods to buyers. He was married to a good, clever woman, and they had three attractive children. But—there is often this blighting 'but'—he was a drunkard. Little by little the fetters of the evil habit had been hammered on him, and ultimately he was the slave of one sin. His excesses were fearful. It would be too sickening to record the foulness, the devilry of his extravagances—it is sickening enough simply to recall them. At last his health and his business both broke down. He was bankrupt, and his friends had to find the money to ship him abroad. The minister had done all that was possible for this victim of intemperance. He prayed with him. He coaxed him. He bullied him. He waited upon him as constantly as if he had been an invalid or a convalescent, so constantly that it would be no exaggeration to say that he nursed the man on his knee. And the end was as stated

—utter failure, leering failure, failure that glorified in itself, that flouted entreaty and defied effort. The man was sent abroad, not so much with the hope of mending him as just to get him out of the way. Our pastor put this man down in his black roll of failures. It was a very unpleasant case to remember, and he was very nearly successful in forgetting it. Imagine, therefore, his surprise and joy the other day when he received a long letter from his old trying friend! There was enclosed in the envelope a photograph of the man, with his wife and children, seated on the verandah of their Australian home, and it was as happy a family group as ever the sunshine caught and chronicled in the little dark chamber of a camera. The letter explained that the man, who was supposed beyond redemption, had been redeemed. The net had been broken. The slave of Satan had been enfranchised with the freedom of the sons of God.

I am ashamed to ask attention to such a case as this—it is so commonplace. Yet it is just in such commonplaces as this that we surprise the mysteries into which the angels desire to look. Old Celsus, in the early days of Christianity, declared that the conversion of the wicked is an impossibility. That which he declared impossible has been done, repeatedly, magnificently. Nothing in all the world is so calculated to establish Christianity or commend it to the loving regard of mankind as the glorious instances, which we now number by the thousand thousand, of how God has given the power of resistance to the weakened wills of men, of how he has lifted up and strengthened the fallen till at last they could live in the face of the old despotic temptations and defy them. One Bunyan delivered from blasphemy, one Augustine saved from lust is a better sort of apologetic for Christianity than tons of books. The gospel is not a mere word, the declaration of liberty to the captive—it is a liberating deed, the actual opening of the prison to them that were bound.

(c) Complete Immunity.

But with all this, we must never forget that what our Lord taught us to say was, "Lead us not into temptation." He taught us to pray and strive for a perfect immunity from

temptation, for isolation in a world and a life lifted high above all the menace of evil. John Calvin, in his stern way, fearful, probably, lest religion might degenerate to something adipose and helpless, but regardless of the exact words of our Lord, declares that here we do not pray for an entire exemption from all temptations, which, says he, "are very much needed to excite, stimulate and animate us, lest we should grow torpid with too much rest." This is the very reasoning that has begotten not only much foolish talk but also a vast deal of foolish doing, and it is the very style of logic which has given us universal war and a desolated world. In the Middle Ages and later, it was supposed that men would not seek God and heaven unless they were terrorised into a pious frame of mind by the shriekings of lost souls in hell, and the business of the church was to make men hear that misery. In our own day the same sort of reasoning led a Teutonic madman to declare—and to persist in his ravings—that war is the glorious thing that purifies states and naturalises them, that civilisation is doomed without the upcome of some race of blonde beasts and supermen. All this, in a word, is just the silliness of saying that truth cannot exist without liars, and that honesty is impossible without burglars. As a matter of fact, we do pray in this petition for entire delivery from temptation. No doubt we do need stimulus and impulse. But God has not forgotten to provide us with all the stimulation that we need. God's best impulses come from the beauty of the perfect world, not from the danger and horror of the lost world. God meant that more and more we should be drawn by the charm of heaven and less and less driven by the fear of hell. It is always the nobler way of salvation to think joyously of what God has saved us for, than to think fearfully of what He has saved us from.

It is all very well to speak of the superiority of a virtue which has been purified and strengthened by passing through the furnace of trial. But if we remember that in the conflict with evil there is at least an even chance that a man's goodness, instead of being corroborated and sublimated, may be defiled and destroyed, then it is clearly best to have, if possible, that goodness which does not know what it is to be tempted. Temptation is always such a precarious business. We play with edged tools. We meet

alert and practised enemies. It is wisest for us to pray with the Psalmist, "Turn away my sight and eyes from viewing vanity," and with our Lord, "Lead me not into temptation." I venture to assert, emboldened by the literal meaning of our Lord's words that it would be better for us, if we could conceive it to be possible, to retain the ignorant innocence of childhood rather than to gain the knowledge of men, a knowledge which in so many instances has meant the decay and the death of all that is great and noble in manhood.

It is this feeling which gives such radiant beauty to the eulogy spoken on Falkland by the Earl of Clarendon. "Thus fell that incomparable young man, in the thirty-fourth year of his age, having so much dispatched the true business of life, that the eldest rarely attains to that immense knowledge and the youngest enters not into the world with more innocence." To have combined in the early prime of manhood the wisdom of extreme age and the pure heart of childhood—that is the highest eulogy that any man ever earned, nay, that is the fairest thing that any man ever dreamed.

We are always unwise when we *court* temptations. We forget not only our own weakness but the magnitude and the discipline of the foes that are against us. Our boasting is like the brag of the skipper of the "Hesperus," and the morning after the storm demonstrates the folly of our big words. If any man takes the modern doctrine of "descent" seriously, he must know and be afraid of the fury of wild beasts that sleeps in his blood. No man can tell what gross ancestral passions may be stirred in him if he dallies with a sinful company or tries to come to terms with a sinful suggestion. No man should think that he can carry on full sail where so many have made shipwreck. He is but a witling who fancies that his own art of fence is so complete that he can counter every feint and stroke of the adversary that he provokes. We should be cautious, even to timidity, in the danger-zone of the soul. Though it may involve extra travel and trouble, it is safer to go round, to avoid any encounter where there is a chance of discomfiture and defeat. God would not hurl the weakness of an army of newly emancipated slaves against a people like the Philistines long nurtured in war and expert in the

use of arms. He led them by a toilsome roundabout rather than by the nearest road.

Tennyson has told us in his "Northern Cobbler" of a victim of drink who successfully fought down his temptation with a bottle of gin standing day by day before him in the window where he worked. For myself I do not like this tale of the poet. There is too much strut in it, too much of the braggadocio of one whose vanity carries him through, to spite those who predicted his fall. There is never any credit in it, and there is always much danger when we make the temptation harder than it need be. It is not chivalry, in this instance, but quixotry, to give the adversary the advantage of sun and wind.

In all this there is no question about being cowardly and running away from our enemies. It would not have been bravery but stark madness for the little army of Belgium wantonly to provoke and defy the mammoth legions of Germany. It was incomparable bravery for Belgium to maintain the unequal fight when it was forced upon her. There are in the economy of the spiritual world seasons when the only valour of a brave man is discretion.

Nor is there any question, as some would try to make us believe, of dwarfing our nature, of missing the full-orbed development of our personality. What absurdity is it to speak as if avoiding a temptation meant missing some valuable spiritual discipline! Eve got the wider experience, and it cost her Eden. The prodigal craved the wider world and his venture gave him an expert knowledge in swine-food and rags. God means that we should be delivered from all noisome persons and occasions. He proposes to draw us near Himself. He means to keep us altogether outside the orbit of temptation. As we approach God, the power of temptation must steadily weaken. When we at last attain, when we actually stand in His presence, our first look will be before us, one of wonder, to behold the glory and tenderness of His face, and our second look will be behind us, one of fear, to see the shadow which all our life we trod, the shadow of the vindictive pursuer before whom all our days panted forward, and, lo! the shadow with all its fear and its threat will be gone.

CHAPTER IX.

THE EVIL.

Matt. 6, 13. Deliver us from evil.

It is a matter of indifference whether we regard these words as an independent petition, or as a mere complement of the previous petition, and, in spite of the confident dogmatism of such a scholar as Weinel, there is as much justification for taking 'evil' in the ordinary abstract sense as for the view which interprets 'evil' as 'The Evil One'. Taking everything into account, it seems better to look at evil and temptation separately. Temptation is the campaign which The Evil One pushes upon us, which, willing or unwilling, we have to sustain. In that sense, to pray for delivery from temptation is the same thing as to pray for delivery from The Evil One. But our conception of 'evil' must be something wider than 'The Evil One.' There are fish in the sea so silly and so esurient that they will fling themselves upon a bare hook. There are sins in the world which need no adorning or disguising to attract us—we leap upon them without cajolery or prompting. In this case, when we pray, "Lead us not into temptation," the proper addendum would be, not, "Deliver us from The Evil One," but, "Deliver us from ourselves."

Further, in the course of our life, there come to us many evil experiences which we cannot trace back to the workshop of The Evil One. Our existence here is associated with, and dependent upon, a body, and that body is a very delicate piece of mechanism, liable to all sorts of breakdown. Every irregularity in the running of this machine is registered in the anguish of the spirit. The mind controls the machine, and without the machine the mind would be as helpless as a general without an army. But the machine jolts and falls into disrepair, and while the unconscious matter of the body suffers nothing, the conscious mind has to pay the price of the disorganisation in a currency of pain. Always it is so. If a workman uses a

tool, and if the tool heats or blunts or breaks, it is the worker who is bound to suffer inconvenience and loss.

Lastly, there comes the day when the great evil befalls us, when the machine stops altogether, either suddenly, with the crash of accident, or slowly, by the mere exhaustion of the fuel that once sustained life's energies. Then the mind is left without an organ, like a prisoner walled up in a dungeon, unseen, unheard, forgotten. In short, if we are to think properly of the petition for delivery from evil, we shall need to think of the world's triple sorrow, its Sin, its Suffering, its Death. The word 'evil' includes all these mysterious and inevitable things. If Jesus taught us to pray for delivery from evil, He must have some light to throw upon the dark and terrifying places of our life, He must have some balm to bring to our wounding, and some sure delivery from our sore plight.

I. SIN.

Already we have said something on this subject. But now we have to come back again to deal a little further with it. Since we have set out from the Lord's Prayer, it will be advisable to limit our investigations to the Synoptic Gospels, if we do not wish to fall under the censure of the modern professors of interpretation.

(a) Therapeutics and Etiology.

There are two ways of thinking about sin. One way is to think of sin as a subject for historical investigation. The other way is to think of sin as a galloping mischief which needs immediate arrest and cure.

Our consuming interest ought to be given to the therapeutics, and our languid and occasional attention to the etiology of sin. But, as a matter of fact, we are engrossed in agitating the origin and history of sin, and we are left cold by the question of its remedy. We spin the most ingenious conjectures as to how sin crept into our Paradise and wrought us the great hurt. Or, we catch up the scientific jargon of the day. We learn to call ourselves the offspring of an anthropoid stock, and we are forward to assert that what we call sin is nothing but the remnant of the brute in us which, so far, has not been purged out by the

benevolent and inevitable forces of evolution.¹

All this sort of thing is utterly foreign to the mind of Jesus. He was the Healer, not the Historian, of man's disease. And so far as we are concerned, it is surely much better to discover the secret of our regeneration than to explore the causes of our degeneration. It greatly enhances our admiration for our Lord's way of dealing with this subject when we remember that those who have spent their time and consumed their powers in attempting to discover the origin of sin have made no speed in their tasks. The mountain of speculation has laboured long, and has not even brought forth a birth important enough to attract ridicule. Without the aid of philosophy, without the aid of revelation, we know that sin is here, and that its deadly campaign is being waged with importunity and success. We know, by personal experience, that salvation from sin is the only problem of first-rate importance that man has to face. Every cloud that darkens our sky and every burden that chokes our heart will be lifted when we have discovered and accepted the Gospel that came to the earth with Jesus.

(b) Sin and Sins.

We have already dealt with the definition of sin. Sin is one of those fundamental things in life which we know so well and define so badly. Sin is the sort of thing which always seems to have the East Wind blown upon it. It comes to us in a day of withering blight, and it looms out before us in vague, ghostly outline. Life! What is life? It taxes the powers of the best biology to tell us. Electricity! We make it and we manipulate it, and the only thing that we seem not to know about it is what it *IS*. Value! The economists are hard pushed to define the word upon which their whole science rests. Sin! What is sin? It is crime, the offence against God's law. It is ingratitude, the offence against God's love. It is treason, the offence against God's sovereign majesty. And yet, after all these definitions, sin is a vague word. Sin is the

¹ Cf. F. R. Tennant's Hulsean Lecture, "The Origin of Evil." Morley, "Compromise," p. 31.

essence and the summation of all sins, and it is better for clear thinking that we should speak about 'sins' rather than about 'sin.' The theologian deals with a great hazy abstraction, sin, just as the sociologist deals with another vague term, crime. We have to deal with sins in the concrete, and in particular with our own darling sins, just as the magistrate has to deal, not with crime, but with crimes, theft, burglary, brawling, assault and murder.

(c) New Testament Symbols of Sin.

Nothing is more pictorial and revealing than the way in which Jesus speaks about sin. Sin is the condition of those who are self-banished from honour and plenty to want and shame, like the prodigal. It is the condition of those who are duped, who find that the unfathered country of their liking and seeking, which once sang such sweet invitation, which once gleamed with such superlative attractiveness, can, in the event, offer nothing but the grunting company and the loathsome husks of swine. Or, again, the Master describes the sinful state as the state of the "lost." The language of the cultured English world numbers perhaps a hundred thousand words, and there is not one of them all so packed with pity, not one of them all which lays such a stifling load on the heart as the little word "lost." It speaks to us now-a-days of crazed mothers scouring the streets at nights and haunting the police-stations by day for strayed children. It tells of the broken men who have disappeared, for whom the rivers and the quarries are being dragged. It tells of sons gone down to a worse fate than death. It tells of daughters who have erred far, for whom a redeeming love searches with tireless feet and pitying heart. It was the agony of the word "lost" that brought Jesus down to our world, that prompted and explained the love of God in the gift of His Son. "The Son of Man is come to save that which was lost."

Or, again, sin was to Jesus a foul disease fretting the soul. Then, as now, Palestine was one vast lazaret-house. Jesus worked cures upon the bodies of men, not because He was a thaumaturge, peddling His powers, touting for the tribute of the mob's wonder, but because in the healing of men's bodies He wishes to announce the healing of men's

souls. He was quite willing that His invisible power over the soul should be estimated by His visible power over shattered bodies. He cured the man's palsy to evidence His power to forgive the man's sins. (Matt. 9, 6). It is worth remembering that one of our best theologians wrote a book to show that there is a purpose of grace lying behind the miracles which Christ wrought.¹ If we forget this basis of grace, then the miracles of the gospel are not only an offence to science, but they are also an intolerable burden to faith.

(d) The Seat of Sin in the Heart.

Our Lord has some arresting things to say about the seat in which sin resides, and in which it must be healed. In the summer-time when one looks at some river which drags its defiled waters past the wharves of a great city, one may see bubbles of gas rising to the surface, the occasional signs of a constant putrefaction which goes on in the bed of the stream. One cannot cleanse these waters by sprinkling perfume on their surface. One must flush out the bed where the rubbish rots. In dealing with sin Jesus seeks the heart, the bottom of the mischief. He is no superficialist, dressing a window, like a cheap draper, or trimming the fringes of a problem, like a quack-doctor. He puts His finger right down on the sore, suppurating centre of the disease. "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, thefts, false witnesses, blasphemies." (Matt. 15, 19). It is with the heart of life that Jesus deals, not with its rind.

(e) The Progress of Sin.

It is not unlikely that our Lord meant to speak of sin as a progressive evil, as a malignant malady with no quiescent stage. The first story in the Bible shows us that something like this is the nature of sin, that the tempted becomes the temptress, that sin's fool is always made sin's tool. So the psalmist taught. (Ps. 1, 1). So Jesus seems to teach. First, there is only an unchaste thought or a rash

¹ A. B. Bruce, "The Chief End of Revelation,"—see especially Chap. IV.

word. After 'Raca' and 'Thou fool' comes the long process of flouting God and of the hardening of the heart. There is the venial despising of the Son of Man. Evil thought and evil words harden into evil character. At last there comes the sin against the Holy Ghost (Matt. 12, 32), the sin which can never be forgiven, because it inverts all the moral values, because it calls the good evil and the light dark. A man cannot be saved if his mind is so jaundiced that he sees salvation girded with all the horrors of damnation. Then the curtain falls—the tragedy has run its full course.

(f) Sin's Cure.

We need not repeat what we have already said about the great Gospel categories of faith and repentance. But we may observe here that people make a great deal of difficulty—and perhaps not unjustifiably—about the current terms of redemption. The usual phrases, "to come to Jesus," "to be saved," "to be in Christ," make up a mystical terminology which they do not understand. That is the vernacular of some, but with others it strikes unkindly on the ear, and in it the mind can discern no sense. Fortunately, in the gospels the Christian salvation is inculcated in a word which cannot by any process be degraded to a mystery or a party catch-word. That word is the word 'follow.' Follow Me! (Matt. 16, 24). This is the invitation of Jesus, and this is our redemption. To follow Him, to trust the whole ordering of our life to His love and wisdom,—that is to be saved from sin. To explain why Jesus is indispensable to our salvation would be to debate a very difficult question and to re-open a very vexed controversy. But the fact that there is no other Saviour than Jesus is one of the very few things which the experience of individuals and the history of the world have placed beyond question. "The Son of Man hath power to forgive sins." (Matt. 9, 6). "No man knoweth the Father save the Son and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." (Matt. 11, 27).

Dr. Denney has well said that "Follow me" is the summary of all that Jesus has to say to men.¹ Seeberg—a

¹ "Studies in Theology," 29.

theologian from a land out of which we have imported little else than shiploads of perplexities and denials—has said that if anything is historically certain it is that Jesus felt Himself to be the Lord of the world, and that He made the salvation or the perdition of men dependent on their attitude to Himself.² “The Stoics felt the weakness of bare duty, and tried to put it in a personal form by drawing pictures of the perfect man: but the Christians believed that the perfect man had lived among them. They had no need to draw imaginary pictures: only let them follow and walk as He walked.”³ “He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.” (John 8, 12). This was the claim of Jesus, and the history of the last two thousand years has justified that claim down to its last syllable.

If one could follow the sun with such swift feet as travelled round the earth once a day, and if one could follow his slow annual swing from Tropic to Tropic, one would enjoy an endless day and a perennial summer. If a man will utterly follow Christ he shall be saved—in following Him there is no night of guilt, and no winter of sin's power.

II. SUFFERING.

Everybody knows that with the growing refinement of society there has come an increased susceptibility to suffering, and a correspondingly louder volume of wailing protest against the cruelty of existence. In their rude health and their simple ways our ancestors were cased in strong armour against suffering, but we, in our complicated and devitalised existence, are bereft of their defences, and not only are we flung out naked to meet the attack, but, for us, the pain-dealing forces are more and mightier than they were for earlier generations.

(a) The Dilemma of Suffering in God's World.

We know that immediately the world reached a certain stage in its spiritual culture, the facts of suffering, as well as the facts of sin, created a problem for the wise men

² “Grundwahrheiten,” 17.

³ Gwatkin, “Knowledge of God,” II., 70.

which, so far, they have not been able to solve. The dilemmas which the problems of sin and suffering have produced are the most baffling with which human reason ever wrestled. If God is almighty and if He is perfectly holy, why has He tolerated the affront and the havoc of sin in the world which He made and which He governs? If God is perfectly loving and almighty, why has He allowed pain to invade His world? There is pain here, and the conclusion, it is held, must be either that God is not all-powerful, or that He is not all-loving. Dr. John Brown, in a tender story, tells us of a good woman stricken with cancer, and he cries, "Why was that gentle, modest, sweet woman, clean and lovable, condemned by God to bear such a burden?" We writhe in our pain. We shudder to think that we might need to call God limited in might or wanting in love. What are we to do?

One writer, in dealing with dilemmas of this sort, says that thoughtful searchers for truth, at least after a certain age, cannot feel much interested in, or much perplexed by, questions like these.¹ Another writer says that "the bulk of the questions with which the amateur critic poses faith and the illiterate heretic delights the public, are as unanswerable as if it were asked—what is the difference between London Bridge and four o'clock?"² If this is what our apologists are reduced to, it is a very *testimonium paupertatis*. A sort of "Punch" wit, and an adjectival abuse of an objector are very poor substitutes for a reply to his objections. It does not seem very wise, or even fair, to treat the difficulties of people astonished by the incongruity of pain in a world made by a God who is both Power and Love as being due to stupidity, or amateurish youth, or the craving for heretic notoriety. Indeed, with all deference, it must be said that the problem of pain (the fact of pain itself and the mysterious and arbitrary way in which any man's share of pain is appointed to him) becomes acute only in life's latter stages—youth has hardly awakened to the facts which give poignancy to the discussion of the problems.

We need not trouble ourselves to make any anthology of

¹ Flint, "Theism," 253.

² Forsyth, "Person and Place of Jesus Christ," 312.

the protests which the poets have raised against the sorrow and the bitterness of life. Singers, perhaps from world-weariness, or, it might be, from sheer perversity and rebellion, have decided that, even for the luckiest of us, it would have been better if we had never been born at all, that life is a barren shore whereon are only corpses and the wrecks of shattered adventure and futile toil, that the God who could perpetrate such a world as this is not to be envied by the most miserable worm in all His creation, and that, on the whole, God ought to beseech man's forgiveness, and not man His. All these outpourings of the poetic soul may be set aside as ravings, or as due more to the passion for notoriety than to any sincere desire for the statement of fact. Paradox, to some, is more attractive than truth. Some others are far fonder of the thunder which stuns the ear than of a simple sentence which conveys a sense. All the same, we know that there are thousands whose voices are never heard, who make no theatrical exhibition of their wounds, who are anxious, for their own sake, but mostly for the sake of God, that there should be some reasonable explanation of the pain which they themselves have to bear and of the sorer suffering which they have to see in their beloved and which they can neither share nor alleviate. They hear those who state the case against God. Their own experience and their shadowed world seem to sustain that indictment. They long eagerly to hear those who can state the case for God, for the terror of their lives is that they might need, by the force of argument or by the misery of existence, to repudiate God. Nobody on earth could make a theodicy that would be looked at by the professional pessimists. Nobody could ever pretend to vindicate all God's ways in face of all the trying facts in the world. What can be done, and what is timely and needed, is to adduce a few plain considerations, not for the confusion of God's enemies, but for the steadying and the re-assuring of God's children.

Now, in the first place, we must not think that pleasure is the key-word of existence. God did not create a cosy world. God did not make us in order that we should be comfortable. Even heaven, as Principal Fairbairn says,

"cannot be a mere synonym for the agreeable."¹ Whatever may have been the model on which the world was fashioned, it was not built on the pattern of a hydropathic or a holiday-camp. The ideal life is not the idle life. To live sublimely is not to lie on the sunny side of a wall where the sweet, ripe fruits drop into the hands of happy, careless mortals. Nobody, surely, would ever ask such a life. A moment's consideration, and it is evident that such an existence is worthy of no creature but some hog in a pen, which has no anxiety and no toil, to which abundant food is fetched, which has but one occupation, to grow fat for the shambles.

(b) Pain as Warning.

We have to subtract from the total of the world's pain which haunts and perplexes conscience that proportion of it which is due to man's own misdeeds, and which, we shall probably own, requires no apologetic. God cannot have any blame for the pain which we inflict on ourselves. Of course, if any intransigent objector were to say that God made man free, and so God knew that in His world self-inflicted pain was not a possibility or a probability but a certainty, and that, therefore, the blame even of home-made suffering lies at God's door, all we can do is to say regretfully that this is a climax of unreason and that we are wasting time to stop and listen to such perversity.

Men offend against clear laws, and they are punished. They sin again, vainly fancying that the punishment will be suspended when the offence is repeated. Of course, the laws of God's universe are never waived. The law that dogs sin with suffering is not erratic, like the coming of a storm—it is as constant as the rising of the tides. The penalty inflicted by the court of heaven on our misdeeds is never indirect, like the fine which a police-court exacts for petty misdemeanours, some few paltry shillings which a man never misses. It is a direct penalty, like the bite of a whip which a man has to feel on his own bare back. This type of suffering is a man's friend, not his enemy. It is his warning. It is the lighthouse on the sunken reef. It is the red lamp on the railway a mile this side of a broken

¹ "Philosophy of the Christian Religion," 135.

bridge. Pain is the scout on the outskirts of life to report the approach of danger. One author has gone the length of saying that "all necessary pain is protective, guardian."¹ But we must go a step further. Pain is not only the sentinel to advise us of the approach of danger, but pain is also the administrative justice which inflicts enhanced penalties on those who do wrong after warning. Pain is the watchman to warn, and pain is the policeman to punish those who neglect the warning.

(c) Pain, the Prime Agent in Civilisation.

Unless for the hopeless persons, who declare that our civilisation from top to bottom is a colossal blunder, it will be worth while to notice that it was fear, begotten of pain, that led man up to all the distinction and achievement of his culture. God "counts progress worth suffering. Suffering is permitted for the ennobling and the advance of our race. The evil is therefore, for our sakes."²

Primitive man, we are told, was but a beast, at the mercy of wind and storm and cold, overpowered by hunger and disease, preyed upon by wild beasts that were bulkier, swifter, stronger, more numerous than he. What then was it that made him the crown of the universe and the lord of creation? It was not simply his intelligence. It was brains sharpened by want and the fear of want. Pain made man's feet fleet and his fingers deft. Pain whetted his wits so that he was able, with amazing cunning, to make the weapons that made him more than a match for the aggressive wild beasts about him. What drove him to the school where he learned to make a weapon with which he could kill from a distance, where he learned to make a trap and ensure his provision for the morrow? It was pain, the memory of yesterday's want, and the fear that it might recur to-morrow, that led men to keep flocks and till the fields, that taught them how to dig or burn a boat out of a fallen log and launch forth to gather in the harvest of the deep. It was pain that did all this, the necessity that man should have a steady supply of food and a safe world in which to enjoy it. The schoolmaster stands over his pupil all day.

¹ M. J. Savage, "Life's Dark Problems," 85.

² Orchard, "Problems and Perplexities," 19.

Sloth he will not allow. "Up, up!" cries the monitor, "there is so much to do, and so little time to do it." So pain, like a schoolmaster, stood over the youth of our race, and cried men on and whipped them forward with a kindly harshness, till at last man stood on the very pinnacle of creation, the wonder and the glory of the universe.

It is another aspect of the same fact, that the world's greatest leaders and workers have been men of suffering. Dante, Milton, Pascal, Boston, Darwin, Tennyson—these are the men who, for the world's lasting good, graduated in the school of pain.¹ It is a man's own sorrows that teach him sympathy and enlist him in the great army of comforters. A notable fact! Dr. Mackenna tells us² of the *saccharomyces*, or yeast-fungus, which, at a suitable temperature, grows luxuriantly in a solution of sugar. But as it grows it converts the sugar into alcohol, and when the alcohol has reached a certain degree of concentration it kills the yeast fungus. And we may add that pain is a fungus which by its very success destroys itself. Pain is the poison that carries its own antidote. Pain, the invader, always recruits for the army of the defence. John Bright, to take a classic instance, was called to the service of his suffering country when his heart was wrung with anguish over the too early death of his young wife. In the hour when all that he loved was lying cold and still, the hour of his own desolation, he understood the sorrow that lay upon the land, he heard the summons to serve, and he obeyed.

This is a consideration which might well thrill us with wonder at the ways of God, which, I had almost ventured to assert, might make us grateful for the suffering which is so subservient to our higher well-being. It was suffering that taught men sympathy, that destroyed the cruel instincts of their hearts, that thrust men out from their own warm and sheltered existence to the service of the needy. "Nature by her very inhumanity has made man human."³ The great among the sons of men have been men of sorrow, and among the great the greatest has been He who was pre-eminently The Man of Sorrows and acquainted with

¹ Momerie, "Origin of Evil," 11.

² "Adventure of Death," p. 16.

³ Fairbairn, "Philosophy of the Christian Life," 138.

grief. "You cannot arraign a God who Himself suffers."¹

(c) Self-suggested Pain.

Doubtless the objection has already risen in our minds that this way of treating the problem of pain is out of order. We seem to have been treating the problem of pain, not from the point of view of the Lord's Prayer, or even of the Synoptic biography of Jesus, but in the most general way. This objection, which is not without justification, brings us to observe that there is no special notice or treatment of pain anywhere in the gospels. We know that our Master was grave, anxiously concerned about man's delivery from the load of his sins, very sympathetic toward the sick, the poor and the outcast. But He had no particular apologetic to offer for the world's sufferings. He had no mendicant's interest in placarding and exploiting the miseries of men's bodies or estates. Even with regard to His own last agonies on the cross—and death by crucifixion, we may well believe, was the most exquisite torture that ever fiendish ingenuity discovered or inflicted—the New Testament is wonderfully reticent. It is always precarious to argue from the silence of our documents, but in this instance it is probably not so risky to conclude that a great deal of the pain and misery which perplex us simply did not exist for Him at all. Surely we may say that in this world there is a very great deal of pain which is not pain at all till we begin to attend to it. There are every-day, trifling annoyances in life which we ought to ignore or dismiss, but we brood over them and regard them through high-power microscopes, till at the last our little bruises are very martyrdoms.

In America there started up recently a school of cranks who declared that there is no such thing as pain, and that, to get rid of the pain which we think we have, all that is needed is to think it away. Now if any one will think of the rapidity with which this "Christian Science" leaped into the importance of a first-class vogue, and if any man will think further of the avidity and the lavish expenditure with which the public buys patent medicines, not to speak meantime of the ingenuity and the outlay of advertisers who have pills and syrups for the healing of the public's

¹ Carnegie Simpson, "Facts of Life," 74.

ailments, he will get some insight into the magnitude and the pressure of the problem of suffering in this world of ours, as well as some acquaintance with the simplicity and even gullibility of the public upon any intimation of a cure for the ills that flesh is heir to.

There must have been some slight tincture of truth in the assertions of the American faddists, or their tenets, instead of being welcomed, would have been laughed out of the world in a week. And the simple truth of which they had caught a glimpse is just this, that there is a great deal of pain in the world which is nothing at all till we whimper under it, till we attend to it and think up a slight inconvenience into something like the pangs of dissolution. There is much pain in the world of which we can say that it is nothing, or that it is the direst agony, that it is a scratch or a fatal wound, just as we think it. It all depends on the mind that we bring to it, our bravery, our cheerfulness, and, above all, our faith. The suggestive treatment of disease is slowly coming to be recognised by the whole medical faculty as a legitimate and hopeful means of healing. Although it is very astonishing to learn how many diseases, and what unlikely diseases, yield to suggestive treatment, yet probably no one fancies that the occupations of the druggist and the surgeon are gone. It would be absurd to say that all the pain, or even that most of the pain, in the world can be thought away, but, undoubtedly, there is a great deal of pain that we can abolish simply by paying no heed to it.

I venture, therefore, to assert that there is little or nothing in the gospels of what we may call the "problem" of pain, because our Lord had a different mind from ours, and because He dwelt in another sort of world. His was the brave, believing, occupied, happy mind, and all who have His mind must be saved from the whimpering and the gloom, and, consequently, from the discomfort and the pain of our hypochondriac world.

(d) The Vicarious Sufferings of Jesus.

If from the sum of the world's sufferings we deduct the pain which is the sequel and the punishment of sinning, if we subtract further the suffering which is home-made, self-suggested, the remainder of suffering which we have yet to

account for is large enough. The ultimate quietening of the heart, in face of this irreducible minimum of suffering, is to be sought at the cross of Christ. The pain that seems so dark is illumined by the fact that it is suffering on behalf of others. Christ gave His life "a ransom for many." His blood was shed "for many." As James Hinton has said, "Nothing can make pain so good as that it should be borne for others. So it becomes a privilege."¹

The thought upon which Christ was carried through His fiery trial was just that He was suffering for others, that He was abandoned of God that others might be reconciled to God, that His tears were the condition of their joy, that He was dying bitterly in order that they might have sweet life in the eternal world. One may believe—although one might despair of demonstrating it—that all our mysterious pain is to be explained as Christ's sufferings are so beautifully explained. They are the sacrifice which we have to make for the blessing of others.

The martyrs had little sense of pain at the stake. They went elate, singing into the arena. But we need not betake ourselves to that heroic world in order to obtain some insight into the meaning of our distresses. A Scottish poetess has made a fisherwoman sell her fish in the streets of Edinburgh with the plea that it is not fish at all she is selling, but 'lives o' men.' We may think profitably of those toilers of the deep in the long cold nights of their labours, wet to the skin, hauling on a dripping net, precariously poised all the time in a reeling boat within arm's length of death. That toil and suffering of theirs were lightened and sublimated by the thought that it was for wife and child that they were enduring all. If we could but see, as we might see, that all our perplexing sorrows and pangs are endured for others, for their peace, for their enriching, for their very being, surely that would take away the poisoned edge of our complaint, and help us to suffer, like Jesus, silently, willingly, thankfully.

III. DEATH.

(a) Death, the Corollary of Birth.

It is possible to find people in the world who deny the

¹ "Mystery of Pain," 71. See also A. Boyd Scott, "Branches of the Cross," 119, ff.

inevitableness of sin and suffering, and it is even possible to find people who question if these things are regrettable. There are perfectionists who make either an absolute or a modified claim to having mastered sin. There are easy-going people who declare that even if sin is inevitable we need not get hot about it. There are also agitators going about who assure us that there is no such thing as pain. If we pass by that astonishing doctrine, however, we know that there are persons who seem to have eluded pain, who live a placid life from the cradle to the grave, who enjoy long years of robustious health, who see nothing about them but smiling prosperity, and who, in a ripe old age, slip away with a smile into the sleep which is death. It is just conceivable, then, that there are people who would not allow us to call sin and suffering inevitable or deplorable things. But, outside Bedlam, no man thinks death other than dreadful and unavoidable. The fabled liquor which was to confer immortality still evades discovery. It is amazing to think how foolish men spent time on the problem of perpetual motion, and how they have left behind them weird mechanisms, monuments of folly and misguided enthusiasm. But it is more amazing to think how other men, of more attenuated sanity, have actually brought death down upon themselves in the fond search for a means to stave off death. Death itself has mocked all these poor devices, or rather passed them by unheeding, as a mail-clad knight ignores a babe brandishing a straw. Poverty and wealth, wit and dulness, beauty and deformity, youth and dotage—death lays his icy hand on them all.

Moreover, we remember how the great war smote down the very pick of our youth and spread the gloom of the worst bereavement over thousands of homes. The darlings of our eyes, the pride and hope of our hearts, on whose firm strength we fancied our decay was to find support, lying there stark in death on the plains of Flanders or under the tragic shadow of Achi Baba! The problem of death had never been brought home so poignantly, or to so very many, as in those dark years of the great war. The inevitable cry arose. People, in the waste of their days, asked for news of the welfare of those who had—O so gallantly and so readily!—ventured and lost the dearest of a man's possessions. Were they gone like wisps of mist that fade into

the air? Had we to think of those handsome, clean, young fellows as now nothing but so much carrion festering in a shallow hole? Or, to prevent madness, had we to stop thinking altogether?

Those who were Christians knew how to meet the grief and the yearning of their stricken hearts. But, for others, undoubtedly such books as Lodge's "Raymond" and Conan Doyle's "New Revelation" did bring a real and a solid comfort. Spiritualism is a difficult subject to speak upon. It has been defended by men of great eminence in the scientific world whose capacity and honesty are beyond question. Others have looked into the facts and the methods of their ascertainment, only to declare that "at most those so-called messages amount to little more than vague and incoherent babblings, or to crazy scribblings on slates."¹ The detection of fraudulent mediums, the endless nonsense and even lies, which have come, along with much that is welcome, from "the other side, leave many people very sceptical. Sir George Adam Smith² says of the mediums and their alleged results, that often "they are unworthy of the pious yearnings which prompt a resort to them, and of the blessed souls that are the object of those yearnings." Still, there can be no doubt that a great many people have been comforted by the "new revelation," and those of us who believe in the doctrine of immortality as taught in the New Testament cannot but rejoice in their comfort. Also, from our present point of view, Spiritualism is very interesting. First of all, it shows how stubbornly the human heart refuses to acquiesce in the closure of death, and how tenaciously we cling to the hope of a triumphant life beyond the grave. And, in the second place, it shows how little such whittled doctrines as conditional immortality or corporate immortality can subdue the instinct or appease the hope of the human heart.

Now, in trying to deal with the problem of death, the alpha and the omega of all the evil in the world, we must crave for ourselves the same latitude of treatment as we claimed in dealing with the problem of suffering. We shall look upon this matter without any hysteric concern. We

¹ Mackenna, "The Adventure of Death," 155.

² "Our Common Conscience," 192.

believe that the God who rules in the world is a Father, and not an ogre. We trust, whether we can find it or not, that there must be some shining purpose behind the dark fact of death, or God the Father would never have allowed this shadow to blacken His creation.

(b) Physical Death.

In the Autumn, when the leaves of the trees die and are thrust off, to prevent a destructive evaporation when the earth is bound hard by the winter cold, we find buds on the branches and twigs. These are the foliage for the next summer which will take up the old business of evaporation and all the vital processes that go along with it when the earth is again soft and full of sap. Old leaves die and are pushed off, that there may be room for a newer, fuller life. There is no doctrine so fundamental in biology as the doctrine that "every part of the organism has its own definite term of vitality, and that there is a continuous succession of the destruction of old cells and the formation of new ones in the tissues, and especially in those where the most active vital changes are going on, for example, in the nervous and muscular tissues."¹ Present-day science is laying great stress on the truth which is so congenial to the religious mind, that life can be only by death.

There's not a flower that glads the Spring
But blooms upon the grave
Of its dead parent seed.

In all our body and its tissues, even in such unexpected places as the teeth, there is an uninterrupted process of decay and creation, of disintegration and re-formation, and without this birth and death in the cells of our bodies, life for us would be impossible. "When Claude Bernard said, '*La vie c'est la mort*,' he enunciated a great physical truth, for every act in life is in essence an act of death."²

We go on now to observe that our bodies bear the same relation to the great organism of society as the cells bear to the lesser organism of the body. As it is necessary for the health of the body that old inert tissue should die and be evacuated, and that new and efficient tissue should be

¹ Chambers's Encyclopedia, art. "Death."

² Mackenna, "The Adventure of Death," 15.

created to replace the perished tissue, so it is *necessary* for the continuance, for the enhanced usefulness and happiness of our race that the old and effete members of our humanity should die and be removed to make room for a more lively sort of life. "Why," asks Principal Fairbairn, "should death seem an evil? Birth is not, and surely death is but the complement and counterpart of birth. It is because the grave is never full that the cradle is never empty."¹ When, therefore, a man has lived the full tale of a man's years, when he has tasted all the joys and honours that life has to give and repaid the hospitality of the world with long and useful service, there is nothing in his passing to wail or knock the breast. Bacon, on this, as on many another matter, has said the fitting word, "The contemplation of death as the wages of sin and the passage to another world is holy and religious, but the fear of it as a tribute due to nature is weak."

(c) Spiritual Death.

Natural laws do not hold in the spiritual world, just because matter and spirit are different, just because, if matter has any significance at all, it gets it from the higher world, and the higher has higher laws than the lower, if indeed its laws are not necessarily different in kind from the lower. God meant the body to be mortal, but God meant the spirit to have His own quality of immortality. We do not depend on God's word alone for our confidence in the doctrine of immortality. Matter is indestructible, and so is energy. These are the servants of man's mind. He manipulates this indestructible matter, and he directs this indestructible energy. "The servants are indestructible; shall the master be destroyed?"²

There is, again, the argument from conscience—there must be another life in which the glaring errors of this are corrected, where virtue reaches the guerdon which here it was denied and ought to have had. There is a 'consensus gentium.' The most distant ages and the most diverse cultures have all believed in immortality. But, for the most

¹ "Philosophy of the Christian Religion," 142; see also Flint, "Theism," 251.

² Mackenna, "The Adventure of Death," 141.

of us, there remains nothing better than the instinct of our own heart. By a necessity of thought we associate motherhood and love, and by a like necessity of thought we link the idea of spirituality with the idea of immortality.

There is a circle of inner mystery within this mysterious business, and we may declare that the outer mystery of death is torment enough without our trying to link up "physical death" in the chain of the divine reaction against sin. Paul (Rom. v., 12,ff) seems to say definitely that death and sin were births of the same day. Dr. Denney seems to uphold this as Paul's conception.¹ But there are others who think that here Paul uses "death" in another than the physical sense.² One might allow that there is no "merely physical death" for such a being as man, but the whole attempt to describe physical death as intimately connected with God's verdict against sin is too subtle for our equipment and tools. It would make a fine rounded-off argument if we could premise a casual connection between sin and bodily death, and then conclude that Jesus had to meet and to bear that death if He was to be our Redeemer. But to many this would look like seeing the conclusion and then arranging the premises to suit, like constructing the sum to suit the answer. Man certainly dies a beast's death, the sort of death which was in the world ere he, the latest comer, appeared on the scene. But by what process, or at what stage in the development of man, the moral factor emerged, and how the moral default ever became explicable, or expiable, in the death of the body, we do not know—and for modest people that confession must end this discussion.

As the centuries have rolled on, human life has risen inestimably in value. There was a time, not so very long ago, when the servant was the master's chattel, when the lord could use his serf like a dog, when the thrall was a thing to be kicked or caressed, to be fondled or outraged, according to the master's whim of the moment. In those olden times nobody seemed to care that plague raged in cities and blighted populations. Pestilence went down the narrow, crowded, dirty alleys of the old cities, and reaped a fat harvest, and the shocking fact was met and accepted

¹ "Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation," 210.

² See Griffith-Jones, "The Ascent through Christ," 172.

with oriental fatalism, as a thing which could no more be altered than the succession of night and day. There was always plenty of cheap human fodder to sate disease and death. Criminals were hanged for trifles—a few lives more or less made no sort of difference. Now we have changed all that. War, the great cheapener of human life, in spite of recent aberrations, is more and more becoming an incongruity, and it is not a great hazard to prophesy that war will soon be an impossibility. We are now spending money lavishly and we are taking the most elaborate pains to protect the public health. The tragic mortality among infants is burning the nation's conscience like a fire. We have built and equipped medical schools, infirmaries, fever hospitals and sanatoria, so that the commonest man may have the best protection and rescue that science and devotion can provide. All these are the proofs of the enormously enhanced value of human life.

Now the cynical way of looking at this higher appraisal of man's physical life is just to say that now we make more of the bodily life because we are more and more convinced that that is all we have, or can expect. Only, it has to be noticed that, broadly speaking, it has been the disciples of Jesus and the representatives of His spirit, it has been those who were most certain of the life to come, who were ever first in all legislation and all philanthropies that endeavour to make the present life easier, happier and longer. The true way of regarding the facts is to say that man is the heir to two lives, a life here and a life hereafter. Simply because the life hereafter is determined by the life here, it is evident that on the Christian view the life here is of inestimable consequence. No injustice, no ignorance, no violence can be allowed to vex or shorten this life, for that might mean to a man whose earthly life is prematurely snatched from him the sacrifice or the impoverishment of the endless life as well. The better chance a man has in the present life, the more hopeful are his prospects in the world to come. No man, we dare to say, could be a suicide or a murderer, or anything that by the remotest possibility might lead up to suicide or murder, who believed honestly in the life to come. Or, take the words of one who certainly holds no brief for orthodoxy—"Once we conceive the life before and after death as a continuous growth, it

will be seen that the health of the soul in the years of eternity is intimately related to its building up in the years of time. Faith in immortality will thus increase, not lessen, the importance of the present."¹

If the present life be important, *a fortiori* the life to come must be of superlative worth. No ignorance, no deception, no obstinacy or misunderstanding must be allowed to deprive any man of his interest in the world to come. Some have maintained that the finally impenitent will be tossed about in endless agonies. Others have supposed that they will be annihilated—endless torment, if one could even conceive such a thing, is a shockingly disproportionate punishment to any wrongs, however flagrant, that a man may have perpetrated in the little span of his life on earth. Others, again, have conjectured that God will give them "a second chance." One might very well hesitate to dogmatise on such awful and obscure points. But there are some things that we can see with noontide clearness. Anyone can see that godlessness is not merely a crime, but a mistake, that, for the life which now is, sin, if we may allow ourselves again the phrase, is "bad business." Anyone can see that those who resist God and His Christ are not merely missing the transcendent prize in the life to come, but they are missing the very best that the present world has to give. If this purblind world would only awake to the fact that Christ, who has fully justified His claim to guide the life that now is, may be safely and confidently entrusted with the direction of the life which is to come, then, for one great thing, the problem of the finally impenitent would no more trouble us, for, of course, there would be no more impenitents around whose fate we might weave our troubled dreams.

Our Lord had an unbounded hope for all classes and individuals.² He was the friend of all pariahs and broken men. He had infinite patience with their backwardness, for beneath all the rags and the shame, beneath their self-contempt and the public disesteem, He saw the radiant fairness of every soul, and He laboured and prayed and died

¹ Rhondda Williams, "The Working Faith of a Liberal Theologian," 193.

² See Farrar, "The Life of Lives," Chap. XXIV.

that every soul might be cleansed and shown to the world in its native worth. Publicans, prodigals, women, children, peasants—these were despised by proud Judaism, and they were loved by Jesus. We admire the patience of the doctor who labours for hours, convinced of the value of even one life, to resuscitate some poor creature rescued from the water or from the poisoned air of a sewer. Where there is the faintest possibility of a lingering spark of life, the untiring physician labours to find it out and to coax it back again to a full flame. This also was the gracious patience of Jesus with those who had been asphyxiated in soul. This also ought to be our patience and our hopefulness with all men. Every man has a soul to be saved. Every man can be saved. Every man is worth saving. Every man has a right to the best here, because every man has a right to the best hereafter.

(d) Premature Death.

We come now to speak of what is usually regarded as the really bitter death, the death that comes too soon. In one of his books Mr. Lecky says, "No one can confidently say whether an early death is a misfortune, for no one can really know what calamities would have befallen the dead man if his life had been prolonged."¹ But in spite of that very obvious consideration, we never allow ourselves to think that the victims of early death are delivered from the possibility of much sorrow, and we constantly distress ourselves with the reflection that they were unjustly snatched away from the certainty of great happiness. We mourn their early fall, perhaps as much for our own sakes as for theirs. We wail that ere noon we have been robbed of the affection which we thought would have gladdened us to the close of the day. Half-way along life's highway we are deprived of the strength on which we had learned to sustain our weakness, on which we had hoped to lean to the journey's end. Death, the blind, heartless blunderer, cuts short the career of promise, lays shattered in the dust the bright talents which might have enriched the treasures of learning and added a new glory to the fame of our land. Early

¹ "Map of Life," 347, ff.

death—ah, this is what baffles us! When, as often happens, one, noble, talented, promising, needed, is cut down in his first prime, and when thousands of mediocrities, and even of scamps, whom the world could well have spared, are left flourishing, no wonder we stand staggered, dismayed.

Take the story of David Gray—there is no need to speak about any imaginary case. He was intended for the ministry of the Free Church of Scotland. But after a few sessions at college he determined that he would visit London, and he fondly hoped that he would carry the literary world by storm. But London's apathy refused to be startled, or even disturbed by the appeal of the young Scot, and David Gray crept back to his father's cottage, broken in body and spirit, to die of consumption at the age of twenty-four. He wrote his own epitaph:—

Below lies one whose name was writ in sand
He died, not knowing what it was to live;
Died while the first sweet consciousness of manhood
And maiden thought electrified his soul;
Faint heatings in the calyx of the rose.
Bewildered reader, pass without a sigh
In a proud sorrow. There is life with God,
In other kingdoms of a sweeter air.
In Eden every flower is blown. Amen.

There is no circle that has not been stunned by the loss of its David Gray. There is hardly one household but thinks heavily of the place in the churchyard where they laid away on a sombre day of winter the brother of their highest hopes, with all his fine promise blighted.

(e) The Death of Jesus.

The gospels do not give us a "life" of Jesus. In the earlier period what we have is only a series of impressionist sketches. There is no pretence of historical fulness, and there is no claim to consecution of events. But when the shadow of Calvary begins to fall across the page, the story suddenly expands and the pomp of events is marshalled in large character and loving detail. We are made to feel that the significance of Jesus' life culminated in His death. The men of the world, the great and the mean, all retire to die. They pass away behind shut doors so that the idle world may not make a spectacle of their weakness and

wandering and disfigurement. But He died in the face of day, before the assembled, wondering world, in the full flush of His manhood. Every other man's death is his own private matter—the death of Jesus was the affair of a world-wide public. The first three gospels have given a prominence and a meaning to the death of Jesus which the 'dogmatic' teaching of Paul cannot better.

It is a very striking thing that, while, in our literature, in Milton and Shelley and Tennyson, the sharpest lament rises for the young and the promising cut off all too soon from the happiness of the sun, there is never in all the New Testament the least complaint that Jesus' death was grievous because it was premature. Yet, as a matter of fact, He died before He was half through the allocated seventy years of a man's life. He died young, *but His work was done*. There is no such thing as premature death. All things are in God's hand. Death comes at His time, at the right time.

The death of Jesus has been dealt with both by patronising and destructive criticism. The latter sort of critics sees in it nothing but a kind of suicide. In the gospels they can see nothing but one who deluded Himself with an old superstition, and flung away His life in trying to force His delusion on the world. The former sort of critics has dealt with the death of Jesus in a sentimental way. They have shed tears to see that idealistic, weak, almost effeminate character flinging itself recklessly against the coarse realities, and falling shattered to earth on the first encounter.

And yet, there is only one adequate account of the death of Jesus, that He gave His life a ransom, that He shed His blood for many for the remission of sins. There is only one way of defending Jesus from the infamy of suicide, and that is the old explanation, Christ's own claim and the church's unwavering belief, that His death was cosmic in its significance. There is only one solution of His agony in the Garden, that He was bearing the crushing load of the world's sin. His life, and much more His death, taught us that the natural death, no matter with what accompaniment of violence or loneliness, no matter how prematurely it comes to blight life's prospects, is as nothing compared with

the spiritual. The purpose of His coming and dying was to make the day of what is called 'death' the day of birth and coronation in a larger life. And His work is the fairest success that the world has ever seen.

"Deliver us from evil." Jesus bore our sin, and overbore it. He drank the cup of our sorrow and left behind in the chalice an anodyne for all who drink after Him. He destroyed death by dying. He *has* delivered us from evil.

CHAPTER X.

THE CHURCH'S DOXOLOGY.

Matt. 6, 13. For thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory, for ever. Amen.

I. THE DOXOLOGY, A LATE ADDITION TO THE PRAYER.

The words of doxology are omitted in the Revised Version. They are not to be found in the oldest manuscripts, nor are they noticed by any of the early writers on the Lord's Prayer. Dean Alford, who is coming now to suffer the neglect of an antiquated commentator, explains at some length that "the doxology must on every ground of sound criticism be omitted. Had it formed part of the original text, it is absolutely inconceivable that all the ancient authorities should with one consent have omitted it. They could have no reason for doing so: whereas the habit of terminating liturgical prayers with ascriptions of praise would naturally suggest some such ending, and make its insertion almost certain in course of time." A later commentator on the gospels, Professor A. B. Bruce, dismisses the whole question of the authenticity of this doxology in a word or two. By the time that Dr. Bruce came to write, the doxology had been so generally rejected, even by the most backward of the conservatives, that he could dismiss it with the curtest notice, simply saying that "it is no part of the original prayer."

We must defer, of course, to the judgment of those scholars who have patiently examined the old texts and commentaries, and we must understand that these words do not emanate from our Lord. What then are we to do with them? Are we to stop using them? Are we to deal high-handedly with them as intruders in a company which they dishonour by their presence? By no means. These words are very old Christian words, even if they are not as old as the time of our Lord. Not only are they old, but they have the additional respect due to very holy associations. These

words began to be used by Christ's followers—it may have been in seasons when the attention of furtive worshippers was disturbed by the dread of the law and the penalty of the arena—before history was ready to chronicle the rise of such forms. They have been uttered all down the centuries by the millions and millions of worshippers who used our Lord's words in their prayers. If our use of these words do not bring us into the presence of the Master Himself, it brings us very near Him. It brings us into the presence of that innumerable company of those who, all down the ages, have loved and served Him. If we do not hear in these words the thrill of our Lord's voice, we do feel in them the throb of that piety and the energy of that trust which, in every clime and in every age, have found God and salvation through Jesus Christ.

II. THE DOXOLOGY AND THE CHURCH.

Is it then a slight thing that in these words we should find touch with the great universal church? Ought these words to be dismissed out of hand simply because the *apparatus criticus* of the scholars will not permit of their being considered as part of the original of the prayer? surely not. If these words have not the *imprimatur* of Christ, they speak eloquently of Christ's Church. The prayer which we are now considering must bring us, before our task is done, to some discussion and decision about the Person of Jesus, the most stupendous character known to history. And this present sentence in the Lord's Prayer arrests us and makes us think for a little about the Church of Christ, which is the most stupendous institution, as He, the Lord of the Church, is the most stupendous personality, in all time.

III. WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

The Christian Church is no nine days' wonder. It is the enduring fact of nigh two thousand years. It is the Colossus-form that bestrides the whole history of our civilisation. It is even now, when sickness and mis-handling have sapped its strength and dimmed its glory, the greatest

society that earth knows. It is the company of those who, in the name of Jesus Christ, have saved themselves and saved the world, who have not merely given direction and power to humanity's spiritual aspirations, but have pioneered all those enterprises in art and science and public polity which our day has learned to value at the highest. What is this Catholic Church? What are its marks? What has given the Church endurance? What is the secret of its deathless life?

We know that the discussion of these questions has filled the ages with the rumble of strife, and we know that, at the present moment, this endless debate divides men into camps of angry and recriminating disputants. Some of the phases of that discussion are so wrong-headed and wicked that no man who speaks of them can keep his temper and his words cool. From the time that the great war began, the world has been sated with horrors. But not even the horrors of such a war can make us forget the shame of Kikuyu. To claim that anything in the nature of Christ's Church can prevent one Christian from sitting at the Lord's Table with another Christian is utterly babyish. But to carry those unspeakable absurdities to Africa and to enforce their observance on the mission-field is an infamy conceived and carried out in the master-style of the kingdom of folly.

In the light of all that has come and gone we need not think that we are too presuming if we think that we are in a position to give a simple and sufficient answer to the question, "What is the Church?" No matter how big or how small any coterie may be, no matter how loud be the din in which it asserts its claim to be the sole representative and exponent of the mind of Christ, no church can produce its scheme of church government and, on the strength of that, claim an exclusive title to the name of Christ's Church. It is clear that Presbyterianism and Episcopacy and Congregationalism have no footing in the New Testament, but that they are due to the wisdom (or the folly) of ecclesiastical statesmen in the early church.¹ And the man who thinks that Christ knew anything, or cared anything, about

¹ Lindsay, "The Church and the Ministry in the Early Centuries," 155.

systems of church government, or that questions about rival systems of church government have anything to do with the salvation in Christ, is a person suffering from hopeless blindness, or something worse.

One might be bolder and say, remembering, all the while, how comforting and strengthening have been the means of grace in the sacraments, that no sacramental theory and no sacramental practice can determine where and what is the church of Christ.

One can go further still and assert that no creed, of all the particular creeds that profess to represent the very truth of the Bible, can be used as a standard to decide which bodies of subscribers are orthodox and within the pale, and which non-subscribers are heterodox and outlawed from the communion of true believers. There has been a sort of rabies in the religious world, the kind of insanity that comes from an excess of vanity and cleverness and a lack of any decent occupation, which has driven men to the ominous business of system-building, and the more deadly business of forcing their complicated confessions and creeds and testimonies on the conscience of the world by the terrors of the criminal law. Just let a man think of the artillery of Rome which hurled upon the world the decrees of Trent with a charge of curses, and then let a man say how much this has to do with the spirit and practice of the Man of Nazareth. We are surely within sight of days of sanity now, for the best of our thinkers have taken to simplifying the statement of the faith. Any man is a Christian who believes in God through Jesus Christ, and for the rest it does not matter if the language of Trent and Augsburg and Westminster is utter mumbo-jumbo to him.¹

We recognise the value, and, indeed, the necessity of church government, church liturgy and even of church standards, but the question of the nature and essence of Christ's church goes back behind all these affairs of ecclesiastical machinery and convenience. It is the culminating vice of the Romish Church that she makes the relation of the believer to Christ depend on his relation to the church,

¹ Denney, "Jesus and the Gospel," 308; and Bruce, "Kingdom of God," Chap. XV.

instead of making his relation to the church depend on his relation to Christ. It must be made quite clear that Christ is not at the disposal of the church, but the church at His disposal, that she is everything or nothing, the final boon or the last curse, according as she is, or as she fails to be, the herald of His mind and the agent of His purpose.¹

The church is made up of those everywhere who, among rich and poor, learned and ignorant, black and white, pray as our Lord taught us to pray, who look up to God as the Father in heaven, who ask and receive the forgiveness of their sins in the name of Christ, who rejoice exceedingly in their citizenship in the Kingdom of God, whose sole desire and endeavour it is to see the will of God done in earth as in heaven. These make the Christian Church, and there is no other way of defining the Church than in the words of our Lord's prayer. These are Christians. All the others are Christians "outwardly," as the word of Paul is, but these are Christians inwardly, "in the spirit and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men but of God." Seeberg remarks,² "If Jesus had won only a few souls here and there, a few peculiar saints and men of the spirit, His work would have collapsed and His wishes would have remained unfulfilled. Celsus or Voltaire would have been right. What a man with His poor followers had built up, other stronger and more cultured men could have, and must have, destroyed. But nothing has ever come of *écrasez l'infame*. For it was not the power of believers to convince men, and it was not the blood of the martyrs, but it was the spirit of Jesus Christ which was the foundation of the church." They who have received that spirit are described in the Lord's Prayer, and they are the Christians, the Church. All down our history they have been the ornament of our civilisation and the guard of honour for our Lord. They were the light of the world. They were the salt of the earth. To-day they are the sureties for every triumph that will cheer the heart of man and wipe the tear-marks from his soiled face.

Because these words bring us back again till we feel the shoulder-to-shoulder touch of the whole army of the saints,

¹ Paterson, "Rule of Faith," 240.

² Grundwahrheiten, 133.

because by repeating the adorations of the saints we feel confirmed in the faith which was once theirs and is ours now, because we feel when we repeat their words that we are pledged to display their loyalty and their winsomeness, it is right that we should shrink from the poverty that would befall our prayers if, for a mere pedantry, we omitted the church's doxology. We shall be wise to continue the use of the hallowed words, for to employ the words of the saints is an unspoken petition that we may be made like them in their loyalty and courage and that like them we may win at last the crown of the steadfast.

IV. THINE IS THE KINGDOM.

(a) God's Sovereignty.

We have shown reason for setting aside all the extravagances of the eschatologists, and we need not trouble ourselves here with that catastrophic, supra-ethical, imminent revolution which the eschatologists think was the obsession of the mind of Christ and the sole interest of the gospel story. "Thine is the Kingdom"—if the critics compel us to remove the authorship of these doxological words down the ages away from Christ, there is less likelihood than ever that there is any eschatological reference in them, for it is one of the prime principles of the eschatologists themselves that, with the death of Jesus, Christianity passed into the transforming (or destroying) hands of Paul, and the genuine eschatology of Jesus was dead beyond all recall.

"Thine is the Kingdom." This is the same doctrine as figures so largely in the Old Testament scriptures. It is the truth which comes home to us with such majesty when we sing the ninety-third psalm to the stately tune of our tradition, "The Lord doth reign and clothed is He with Majesty most bright." The Lord reigneth—the scheme of things in which we move and play a part is His by creation, and His by constant oversight and direction. Our prayers are not addressed to any proxy, to any manager left in charge of the business during the principal's absence. We pray to Him who sits at the centre of things, in whose hands is the sway of all the stars and the disposition of the destiny of every son of time.

(b) The Venture of Faith in God's Reign.

It is not the easiest thing to believe in the divine management of the world. Indeed it is of the very hardest to confess that the Lord reigneth. Day by day there are many things flung under our eyes that are, or look as if they were, the contradiction and the mockery of God's dominion. The philosophers and the preachers spin a tenuous web of words. They try to show how reason slowly emerges out of the welter of things, and how order slowly masters the confusion. They demonstrate to us how men blunder along through long series of errors, till, after painful experience of wrong ways, they at last hit on the right way. They explain that there is a soul of goodness in things evil, and that the ages with deft fingers are busy stripping away the wrappings that conceal and choke the soul of good, so that the good may come forth owned and regnant in all the world. But there never yet was any philosophy of history which quieted the hearts of men, which sustained them when they saw or bore pain and loss, disappointment and betrayal, or which nerved men with conquering endurance during the triumph of godless forces. All those systems, philosophic and apologetic, are delicate exotics. They can live only in the shelter and the hot air of studies and class-rooms. They die when they are put out to wrestle with the hardness of real life.

To maintain the kingship of God is not a thing forced upon the mind like the conclusion of a syllogism. It is an act of faith. How do we exercise faith? In its very nature, faith is at the first a sheer dark-leap, a venture. But faith is not a fatuity. The consequences of any mad act declare its madness. But the act of faith and the life consequent on faith justify themselves. The proofs follow, they do not precede the act of faith. If a man venture to believe that he can leap unhurt from a precipice, there is a very rude ending waiting him and his belief. But if a man trust in God, there can be no painful sequel to write up a satire on that belief. Daily traffic with the world will corroborate a man's faith in God, and his faith in God will ennoble his daily traffic with the world. Every day and every hour will bring its gleaming facts to confirm the man in his belief in God. And he himself will be a stronger,

happier man by reason of his faith in God's dominion. And further—which is a thing very clear and very fine—to live steadily in the faith that God reigns is the one way to make the reign of God undisputed in the world. Faith at the first may be hard, but faith in God's reign is making that reign more and more of a reality, and so faith is making faith more and more easy.

Coleridge speaks of two questions that an objector may advance when he is asked to consider faith in God through Jesus Christ; How can I comprehend this? and, How is this to be proved? “To the first question I should answer; Christianity is not a theory or a speculation, but a *LIFE*; not a philosophy of life, but a life and a living process. To the second: *TRY IT*. It has been eighteen hundred years in existence, and has any one individual left a record like the following? ‘I tried it, and it did not answer. I made the experiment faithfully, according to the directions; and the result has been a conviction of my own credulity.’ If neither your own experience nor the history of almost two thousand years has presented a testimony to that purport, not the strong, free mind but the enslaved will is the true, original infidel in this instance.”¹

(d) The Endless Reign.

Yet, in this earth, faith is but faith, not sight. There are confusions and perplexities, but there is also solace. If the heathen rage and the peoples imagine vain things, if our fate is dark and if the outlook for the world pains our heart and offends our conscience, we know that these factions and fears are but for a day. Violence dies, and dies the sooner the more violent it is. But the Lord reigneth from everlasting to everlasting. Thine is the kingdom *for ever*.

V. THE POWER.

(a) God as Love, Wisdom and Power.

The opening address in the Lord's Prayer, “Our Father which art in heaven,” attributes to God the qualities which

¹ “Aids to Reflection,” 134 (Bohn's ed.).

we call qualities of the heart. He is the Father in heaven, and His name is Love. The considerations which we were noticing a moment ago gave to God the qualities which we call the qualities of the head. He is the wisdom which originates and guides all things that are. And now, this sentence which we are about to consider gives to God the qualities which we call qualities of the hand. He has all *power* for ever.

There is surely something inevitable and impressive in this trinity of qualities which we find in the character of God, this harmony of affection, knowledge and might. See what we have here!

Here is Love, but it is nothing like the blindness and the softness of doting parentage. It is love guided by the supreme wisdom. Here is love, but it is not the baffled love of poor humanity, not that love of earth which in the day of crisis would do everything for the beloved one, and can do nothing. It is a love resistless in the cause of the beloved, because it is a love carried on the strength of the Omnipotent.

Here is Wisdom. But it is not the wisdom of cold and aloof erudition. It is the wisdom that is made kindly and familiar by love. Here is wisdom, but it is not the futile wisdom which conceives grandiose schemes and goes bankrupt after tracing a foundation and rearing one naked wall. It is the wisdom whose plans are executed by the divine power, whose mere fiat is the calling of new worlds into being.

Here is Power, but it is not the power of blind despotism. It is power softened and tempered by love. Here is power, but not the power which delights in the extravagance of barbaric display. It is the power which is informed, refined, controlled by a perfect wisdom.

The loving God, the wise God, the mighty God! Is it any wonder that just here in this prayer, where we have such a moving and magnificent revelation of the character of God, we should find the millions and millions of worshippers all down the centuries, kneeling in adoring love and wonder, offering prayer and praise to so great a Being?

(b) Seeking the Knowledge of God's Power.

When primeval man began to observe and reflect, he

became conscious that he was surrounded on all sides by mighty forces. His world was made for him and his life was begun and conditioned for him by forces of which he was ignorant, by powers over which he exercised no control. As knowledge grew deeper and deeper, it was borne in upon men that around them there were not many powers, but that all the forces which they saw at work were the servants of one supreme Power. And the need and the desire of the human heart was to know what this Power is, to discover how one may lay one's life along the lines of force which stream out from that great Centre. To put it in plainer words, the supreme task for man was just to know what God is, and what is His will for man and the world. It is evident that if our purposes run dead against the plan of the universe, or if our schemes cut across the lines of divine force that stream out from the Focus of all Power, there can be nothing for us but failure and loss.

Well now, that distressing ignorance about God has been ended long ago, and ended in the happiest manner, by God Himself. Since Christ has come, we know enough about God to understand what His will is, to know what are—if we may go back again to the old figure—the lines of force which run out from God through all the universe. We know the design of God, the objects to which His mighty power is directed. And if any man is still in doubt about what God's will is, let him but repeat again the Lord's Prayer, and he will know all that any man need know. God's will is what Christ taught us to pray for. God's design is that we should be His loyal subjects, His loving children, and that we should day by day walk in a world that lies beyond temptation and sin. God's desire for our world is that it should be a second heaven, where His will is done perfectly, where the dwellers are angels who find all their honour and happiness in the service of God's kingdom.

(c) Application of the Knowledge of God's Power.

The man who is going to build a house knows that there are radial lines of force running downward to the central particle of the earth's mass. He ascertains by a plummet how these lines run, and when he raises his walls he builds them as accurately as he can along these lines of force. If

his wall is dead in line with the downward-pulling force, then nature is his ally and she will raise her invisible buttresses to keep the man's shelter standing. But if it is out of plumb, his house, meant for a comfort and a defence, will be nothing but a weakness and a danger. We know exactly by the plummet of Christ's word, how the true, enduring life is to be built. We know, to change over now to Christ's own figure, where is the foundation of sand, and where the foundation of rock. If a man build his life against or across the purpose of God it is the same as if he should build his house on a shaking bog. If a man build as and where Christ taught, then the power of God will be with him to establish and adorn his life for ever.

(d) The Endless Power.

And again, if we are amazed at the power of evil things in this world, we know what is the consolation. Daniel in his vision saw all manner of truculent and successful powers arise and flourish, only to fall again. The lion with the eagle's wings passed away. The bear with the three ribs in his mouth passed away. The leopard with the four wings and the four heads had dominion for a little, and then passed away. The nameless fourth beast, "dreadful and terrible and strong exceedingly, with great iron teeth," had a season of raging license, and then passed away. Then arose the kingdom of the Son of Man. "His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." (Dan. 7, 12). The power of evil is only for a time—Thine, O Lord, is the power for ever!

VI. THE GLORY.

(a) Glory of State.

Splendour has always drawn the eyes and earned the wonder of men. The mythical magnificence of Semiramis, the pomp of Assyrian and Egyptian despots, the opulent and spacious palaces of Roman emperors on the Palatine Hill, the brilliance of 'the field of the cloth of gold' where two great potentates met in unity of desire and rivalry of display—these are the fields in which the world has found

the food of wonder. But the splendid state of these courts and functions has all passed away. Resplendent royal mansions have frittered under the heel of time to dust-heaps. The once glorious temples on the Acropolis are in ruin. The voluptuous beauty of Cleopatra, which intoxicated the world's greatest men and unmanned them, long ago made a banquet, and not a very great one, for the worms. With God there are glory and magnificence, and these make His throne dazzling. He has an excellence of state which is reflected in the supreme beauty and splendour of those angels who wait upon His bidding. In God there is that perfection of glory on which decay can breathe no taint. Thine is the Glory!

(b) Glory of Knowledge.

As the ages have rolled on, taste has refined, and the criteria of glory have been spiritualised. Men have turned away, tired of the pageantries of Semiramis and Cleopatra, of Augustus and Caracalla. Men feel that there is something crude and barbaric in all that. What was pompous in earlier days has now turned tawdry and tiresome. We are not astonished, but bored, at the thought of knights 'all clinquant, all in gold, like heathen deities,' or of men who each 'showed like a mime,' or of dwarfish pages 'all gilt,' or of grand dames so burdened with gold and gems that they perspired 'to bear the pride upon them.' All the gorgeous show, which impressed Shakespeare and which he meant to impress us, is garish and cheap. That glory is fly-blown. Those trappings are tinsel and pinchbeck. The language of heraldry is a despised jargon.

The world, too, has turned away from the magnificence of gorgeous feast and banquet. We have sickened at the sight of roast-beef kings and swilling courtiers, and we cannot look that way any more. The old glory, too, of warfare is gone. Its colour, its dependence on individual prowess, its accompaniment of romance all departed with Bayard. What is left of warfare is a revolting business of chemistry and machinery, of noise and dirt and stench.

Men are proud to be able to say that they have found a better glory to admire. The better glory of our new discovery is the glory of knowledge. Here is the new

dignity of our race, not that a man should make himself a lay-figure to be decked by tailors and loaded by jewellers, but that a man should *KNOW*, that a man should have the entry into that magnificent palace of the spirit where the free riches of thought wait to gladden every seeker. Knowledge is the worthy object of our admiration and ambition. To know is the glory of a man.

Men are never tired making out the inventory of the new worlds that knowledge has explored and charted. We know the earth geographically from pole to pole, and there are no blanks now in the map that ignorance fills up with pictures of elephants and tigers and savage men. We know the chemistry of the land and the sea and the air. The great forces, steam and electricity, are working now like tamed giants in the service of man. We are become so clever that we can speak over a thousand miles and we can see through a deal board. Soon we shall liberate and harness the mighty energies of the atoms. We know the starry spaces. We know the colour and the age of all the orbs. We have put them in the scale and weighed them. We are proud of all this new knowledge. We are become confident. Nothing can hinder our further progress. The present century will achieve such new triumphs as will make the successful past a day of very small things.

But after all, while we dwell with complacency on the wonders of knowledge, the really wonderful thing, on which we should lavish all our admiration, is not what we know, but the mind by which we know. The artist is always greater than his picture. Shakspeare is greater than any play he ever wrote. The mind, the illimitable, the unwearying, the unsatisfied agent of our knowing, is far greater than all the matter which mind subdues.

The glory of knowledge, too, is in God. He is the Infinite Mind. We saw in our first chapter that the only world we know, or can know, is the world constituted by our thought, and if there be any world independent of our thought it must be a world dependent on the Infinite Thought. And not only so, but the Infinite Mind is the presupposition of all finite minds. Our minds could not make even a start unless the Infinite Mind filled all the world into which our minds go forth, from which they return laden with spiritual treasure. If God's mind did not

fill all, our minds would be none better than bells ringing in vacuo, or a bucket plunging up and down in an empty well.

The glory of knowledge, too, is in God. His knowledge is not the hoarded secret of some chemist or engineer who will not divulge his discovery because his secret has a market value. God is glorious, not merely because He knows, but because He made us to know, and because He is willing and anxious that we should share His knowledge, as we already share His nature. Men are crying out for knowledge. Ignorance is our chief enemy. A great scientist declares that "tuberculosis is propagated, not because of the failure of science, but because of the ignorance and stupidity of the population."¹ Every evil in the world is propagated by ignorance or by stupidity—either men do not know, or they refuse to live according to knowledge. The wise sons of time live and die with the cry upon their lips, "Light, light, more light!" The best sons of our day have robbed the night of its slumbers, they have stolen the red bloom of health from their cheeks, they have made enormous and willing sacrifices for the sake of knowing, for everything else in life is worthless without the glory of knowledge. It is, doubtless, fine to know all that wise men have established and good men have dreamed. But all that sorely won erudition is no better than scattered darkness, no more hopeful than night thinned down and staved off for a little by the straggling remnants of day, unless we seek and find the better knowledge that He gives. The only glorious knowing is knowing as He knows.

(c) Glory of Self-sacrificing Love.

But in the regard of man even the glory of knowing has been eclipsed by a nobler glory. The old despotisms existed in order that one man might be glorious. Every subject was robbed of distinction, even of consideration, in order that the glory of the king might be without the shadow of rivalry. The basal idea of the later monarchies was that there should be a king surrounded by a dazzling court, a king whose glory was shared and widened by the

¹ Metchnikoff, "The Nature of Man," Chap. IX.

glory of an ancient aristocracy. In that epoch the glory belonged to a few. But, at last, in the unrolling of the world-story, we have come to a time when the glory of a great land is seen to lie not so much in the splendour of its court or the magnificence and power of its nobles, when the glory of a great nation, king, lords and commoners, is measured by the way it cares for all its citizens, its children, its aged, its poor, its imbeciles, its criminals. We ought to bless God that we have been privileged to see such a new and noble conception of a nation's glory. We ought to thank God that we have been privileged to see such a new and tured women, so many men of ancient name and so many men of no name at all, are thinking, not about themselves, but about those who have been hardly dealt with in the struggle for life.

The barbaric glory of state is gone. Banquet and feast have lost their charm. The glitter of war has turned to the dulness of lead. But the glory of benevolence is gleaming fairer every day. Goodness is more and more attractive. It is now the glory of benevolence that crowns and gladdens our humanity.

The origin of that glorious goodness, and the consummation of it, are both in God. It is His blessed nature to be glorious with the glory of beneficence. It is that glory of His which at long last is coming to glorify the world. If we can say in a far better sense than the battle-hymn, "Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord," then we must wait upon Him and learn of Him, so that that glory of benevolence, which is God's highest distinction, may be the glory of our earth and of all her sons.

(a) The Endless Glory.

The glory of stately palaces and dress occasions is consumed by the burning years as utterly as the moth in the candle-flame. So far as the individual is concerned, the glory of learning must pass away—on the touch of the finger of death the brain of the sage must drop all its hoard, just as on the same touch the hand of the miser must unclasp and drop all the gathered bits of yellow metal. But the glory of goodness is the glory of God, and it is the eternal glory. Thine, O Lord, is the glory *for ever!*

CHAPTER XI.

EPILOGUE: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF JESUS.

I. THE INEVITABLE QUESTION, "WHO IS JESUS?"

(a) The Lord's Prayer leads us to the Lord.

It must be felt that our studies are still incomplete. To leave off at the doxology would be a sort of bathos, like a court function without the royal presence. What we have already found is only a theological torso. But our minds demand a whole—we cannot be fobbed off with bits of a thing. And we cannot have anything like a finished view till we turn round from the words of the prayer and ask the crowning question, "Who was He who taught the world so to pray?" At the beginning of our studies we were compelled to discuss the being of God as the presupposition of all prayer. Now it is evident that we cannot put a period to our studies till we have made some serious endeavour to settle the identity of Jesus. The Lord's Prayer inevitably leads us to the Lord. We cannot begin any prayer without belief in God; we cannot end this prayer without faith in Jesus Christ.

Again and again it has been pointed out that the deepest and the hardest question for Christianity is the question of the Person of its Founder and the place which He occupies in the universe. If it be true that "the character of Jesus is the central evidence for the truth of Christianity,"¹ and if "we are led by a natural and inevitable process of thought to regard the mind of Christ as the central norm for theology,"² then, out of all question, we are forced to ask ourselves, "Who is He?"

(b) The Greatness of Jesus as displayed in the Prayer.

The doctrine of the Fatherhood of God has been revealed

¹ Campbell, "New Theology," 64.

² Cairns, "Christianity in the Modern World," 20.

by Him who alone of all the sons of time had a reach equal to the height and the depth of the matter. This revelation is consummate in its beauty and complete in its adequacy to our salvation; its moral beauty and its saving adequacy are the final witness to the stature of Him who was its Herald. Who was He, then, who taught men with such finality about God's Fatherhood, who called Himself Son and had the Son's right to speak familiarly and reliably about the Father?

We have been led in this prayer to think of God's 'name,' and to hallow it, to know and to honour all the revelation which God has been pleased to make, and to make us capable of receiving. In which connection we may say that it is simply talking at large for people to parade the names of Buddha and Confucius and Lao-tsze and Mahomet alongside the name of Christ, as if they were His serious rivals. Jesus was the Revealer of God's character in a way which no other ever was, or ever claimed to be. The only adequate and worthy revelation which we have of God is the work of Jesus, and His revelation stands to-day, after all the fiery assay of the centuries, surer and fairer than ever.¹ His is the unrivalled word about God. Two thousand wondering and questioning years have gathered round His truth, and they have been unable to exhaust His words, far less improve upon them. Who was He, we ask again, who was able, in a ministry of perhaps no more than one year, to make a revelation which keeps so wonderfully the dew of its youth and the vigour of its prime?

He described, proclaimed and flung open the Kingdom of God. He laid down the conditions of its citizenship. He invited men to God, not as if He were God's attorney, tied down to the letter of His brief, but as if He were God's partner and intimate.

He taught men to pray that they might do God's will, and in His own life the world saw for once, and for once only, the perfect understanding and doing of the will of God.

He emphasised and enhanced man's spiritual worth. Yet with Him the ennoblement of soul never meant the degradation of the body, but rather the body's honourable treat-

¹ Seeberg, "Grundwahrheiten," 54.

ment as the functionary and ally of the soul.

He taught men to pray for, and to show forgiveness. He Himself mediated and guaranteed God's forgiveness to man. It has been said that "forgiveness to man is the plainest of duties and to God the profoundest of problems."¹ Christ made the human problem plain and easy. Christ solved the profound problem of God, for He broke down every pale and ushered man into the welcoming presence of God.

He taught men to pray for delivery from temptation, and He himself has been to countless millions more than a shield from all the onslaught of crafty and insidious wickedness. He taught men to pray for delivery from evil, and all our world's best hopes of ultimate delivery from sin, from suffering and from death are built upon Him.

Evidently the moral stature and the cosmic significance of this Teacher make certain questions inevitable. Who was He? Why did the earliest Church come to call Him 'Lord'?

II. THE STORM-CENTRE OF THE AGES.

(a) The Provocative Christ.

We may be allowed to speak of the 'provocative' Christ when we remember how from the very first Jesus raised up against Himself such blind hate as was shown by the Scribes and Pharisees, and how from the first He drew around Him such friends as were prepared to die for Him, and did die for Him. Jesus has been assailed with every engine of contempt, and He has been crowned with a wealth of love and a passion of worship, but hardly ever has He been met with any mere aloof regard. It has been the fate of certain great statesmen we have known to be either greatly beloved or greatly hated. But the world's extreme of love and the world's last word in hatred have both been reserved for Jesus. His Church has ransacked heaven itself for the gems dear enough to grace His crown. There is no honour, no title of glory, that His followers have thought too precious to be called His. They have acclaimed Him for having opened heaven to the sons of

¹ Carnegie Simpson, "Fact of Christ," 143.

men. They have hymned Him with ceaseless anthems because He brought God down to men and lifted men up to God, because He has given a citizenship above to those who without His gracious aid must have been eternal exiles from the city of the soul.

From the very first the passion for Jesus was a highly contagious emotion. His appeal was catholic—the world needed Him, and He drew the whole earth after Him. With irresistible charm He won the hearts of masters and serfs, Greeks and barbarians, and they responded to His drawing with a blithe and adoring love. Christianity was the indigene of Palestine, but it soon found a home and a welcome in every clime of the known world from the Indus to the Ebro, from the shaggy forests of Germany to the yellow sands of Libya. Jesus Himself was a peasant and a villager, but He found an early and an easy entry into the great cities and the most noble palaces, and kings were proud to be His servants. His name and His power founded a Church which conquered the world, not so much by papal *Weltpolitik* as by the inherent might of the gospel of Christ's cross; and we may add with absolute sobriety that this church of Christ's creation is the most wonderful institution in the intellectual, the moral and the social history of the world. Who can He be who has unlocked the love of all the centuries and drawn it upon Himself? Who is He who has made the world His happy subject?

But we must never allow ourselves to forget that Jesus, who challenged and obtained the world's trust, has also, perhaps by some inevitable re-action, been loaded with every despial and contempt. Jewish libellers started the foulest tales regarding Him, and modern critics, like Haeckel, have dredged up these pitiful falsehoods from the cesspools of antiquity and started them again on an unsavoury career, willing enough to use any sort of lie or libel that might blast the name of Jesus.¹ Again, there have been others who did not run thus violently on the fair fame of Jesus, so to say, with the bulk and the blind rage of a charging bull, but who tried to belittle Him with the detraction of faint praise and patronising words, as if from the height of their own excellence they could afford to fling

¹ "Weltraethsel," 131. (Volksausgabe).

away a compliment or two on Him! One of these has said, for instance, that "there was a divine manhood in the heart of this youth," but, at the same time "he had his follies, his faults and sins even: it is idle and absurd to deny it."¹

If the Christian centuries have found that they could have faith in God only through Christ,² there have been those, like the modern Unitarian writer of tracts, who maintained that every honour done to Jesus is a direct felony committed against God. "I only say to men, 'Do not worship Jesus,' in order that I may the more emphatically and earnestly say, 'Worship God, the God whom Jesus worshipped.'"³ To the Christians Jesus was the only avenue by which men could approach God. To the others He was nothing but a greedy gulf lying right across the way to God, a yawning chasm which swallowed down the world's worship and cut off the spirits of men from communion with their Maker. To one man He is the indispensable Herald to usher men into the great presence-chamber of God and secure their gracious reception. To another He is the Prince of Pretenders, diverting the world's homage from the Highest, a traitor alike to God and man.

(b) Eulogists of Christ.

The admirers of Jesus have looked upon His life, and they have exhausted all the superlatives of speech in their eulogy of the wisdom which His words convey and the sinlessness which His life exhibits.⁴ Eloquent preachers, whose culture has lent a lustre to the history of the Christian pulpit, have dwelt on His perfect morality. They have summoned, to testify to the sinlessness of the Man of Nazareth, not only His partisans, but His enemies; not only His enemies, but His indifferent judge, Pilate; not only the haughty and dispassionate Roman, but the remorseful Judas, the traitor, the suicide.⁵ The heralds of the kingdom have loved to dwell on the arresting fact that

¹ Theo. Parker, "Discourse of Matters pertaining to Religion," 196.

² Denney, "Jesus and the Gospel," 48; and Harnack, "Wesen des Christentums," 92.

³ J. T. Sutherland, "Was Jesus God?" 34.

⁴ Watson, "Doctrines of Grace," 190 ff; Griffith-Jones, "Ascent through Christ," 316 ff; Carnegie Simpson, "Facts of Life," 231.

⁵ F. W. Robertson, "Sermons," Third Series—Sermon II.

in the life of their Master there was no "conversion," that the perfect manhood of Jesus was the flower of His unstained youth.¹ Preachers have lovingly portrayed and analysed His character and therein they have found, without much ingenuity of search or display, the perfection and the symmetry of all the virtues. It was Jesus who not only displayed holiness in His own character, but so winsomely displayed holiness that He has made it the passion and the ambition of all true men. He has "charged the ethical nature with an intolerable radiance, and raised it to a white heat."² Men have stood before the Christ and fascinated by His supremacy in goodness, in gentleness, in dignity, in strength, they have broken forth in a dithyrambic admiration—"What a man! What a maker of men! What a master of men and events! What a sovereignty was the mien of His self-consciousness; Lord of Himself, and of all beside; with an irresistible power to force, and even to hurry, events on a world scale; and yet with a soul that sat among children, and a heart in which the children sat!"³

"What least defect, or shadow of defect,
 What rumour tattled by an enemy
 Of inference loose; what lack of grace
 Even in torture's grasp, or sleep's, or death's—
 O, what amiss may I forgive in Thee,
 Jesus, good Paragon, thou Crystal Christ?"⁴

(b) Detractors.

But the *advocatus diaboli* has never allowed the verdict to go in Christ's favour by default. We have already listened to Theodore Parker, who declared that it is absurd to deny that Jesus had "His errors, His follies, His faults and sins even." F. W. Newman declared that Jesus had an overweening conceit of Himself, and that when He was touched He was irritable and hard. If Dr. Horton sketched out the issue in a sort of dilemma and declared that Jesus must be the Son of God and one with God, or that He must have been a bad man, or a mad man, and if the learned theologian added confidently that there cannot be any fourth alternative, then there does not fail such a journalist

¹ Bushnell, "Nature and the Supernatural," Chap. I.

² Carnegie Simpson, "The Fact of Christ," 52.

³ P. T. Forsyth, "The Person and Place of Jesus Christ," 65.

⁴ Sidney Lanier, qu. Fosdick, "Manhood of the Master," 76.

as Mr. Robert Blatchford, who leaps forth to correct the preacher's assertion and to point out that there is not merely a fourth alternative, but even a fifth alternative.¹ The fourth alternative is that the evangelists misunderstood Jesus, and the fifth is that they wilfully misrepresented Him. Taking, then, the alternatives of Mr. Blatchford, we have to put ourselves off with the notion that the Jesus of the Gospels was either a misconception or an imposture. The Gospels offer us a miracle of sinless wisdom. But Mr. Blatchford is also compelled to invoke a miracle, even to get Jesus dethroned and, if possible, evicted from the realm of actual history. It is a miraculous achievement, it is surely a very prodigy among all thaumaturgic wonders, that in an obscure corner of the ancient world a handful of illiterate fishermen and peasants, with no living model before their eyes to provide them a copy, should have been able, through sheer daring of imagination, or by the luck of some resplendent blunder, to portray a character such as subsequent ages have been content to admire, such as all the world's subsequent experience and wider erudition have been quite unable to rival, far less to improve. Most people will feel that the religious miracle of the Gospels is far more credible than the literary miracle so jauntily depicted in "God and my Neighbour."

Again, persons like Prof. E. Haeckel² praise Jesus faintly as a great prophet, as an enthusiast filled with love toward men, but they condemn Him as one who stood far below the cultural level of the classical world, whose inferiority was conspicuous in that He had not even an inkling of that knowledge of the world to which Greek physics and philosophy had attained half a millennium before His birth in Bethlehem.

We may note another sample from Theodore Parker of the blow-hot, blow-cold style of criticism. "It is vain to deny or conceal the errors in His doctrine—a revengeful God, a devil absolutely evil, an eternal hell, a speedy end of the world; but the actual superiority of the religion which He taught, its sublime faith in God, its profound humanity,

¹ "God and my Neighbour," 98.

² "Weltraethsel," 153.

seems also as clear as the noontide sun."¹

"There is clearly something in the fancy of the Christians that all roads lead to Christ. Be the Gospels true or false, He is more than ever the central problem of history, on which the great quests converge; and we cannot hope to discern its meaning or its goal unless we see Him in His true relation to the course of the ages."²

Well now, perhaps enough has been said to show how tense and constant is the controversy round the Person of Jesus. It is possible to gather encomiums of Jesus from the lips of such free-thinkers as Spinoza, Lessing, Rousseau, Voltaire and a dozen such others who cared little for the church which Jesus founded and nothing at all for the theology which seeks to explain the secret of His Person and His power.³ Bousset repudiated Christian orthodoxy for the amusing reason that it has no room for such men as Bismark and Goethe. But Mr. Figgis says that he does not see in Goethe any inspiring substitute for Christ, and he finds his faith in Christianity immensely strengthened by its incompatibility with the ideals of Bismark.⁴ And so, from the earliest to the latest days, the strife goes on. Who can He be who has at once borne the world's scorn and monopolised the world's affection? How does it come that down the ages there should have been these two parallel series of utterances regarding Him, one declaring Him to be the final wisdom, the crowning majesty, the stainless purity, the unsullied love of the universe, and the other bluntly asserting that His cult has been an insult and an impediment to progress, and His worship a blot on the history of nineteen hundred years?

III. A SHORT HISTORY OF THE CHRISTOLOGICAL CONTROVERSY.

(a) The New Testament.

We do not, of course, presume to say that with our very limited apparatus and opportunity we can bring peace to this millennial conflict, or induce the combatants to lay

¹ "Discourse," 169.

² Gwatkin, "Knowledge of God," II., 75.

³ Farrar, "Life of Lives," Chap. IV.

⁴ Figgis, "The Gospel and Human Needs," 12.

down their weapons and submit to terms. What we propose to do is something much more modest. We shall try to show why this conflict began, and we shall try to point out what circumstances have lent such passion to this debate and carried it up from a parochial dispute till it has become the profoundest question with which the wisdom of man has to deal.

A sentence from Mr. Balfour¹—to which we shall recur later—may furnish us with a point of departure and a clue. "Whatever opinion the reader may entertain of the decisions at which the church arrived on the doctrine of the Trinity, it is at least clear that they were not in the nature of explanations. They were the negation of explanations." The heresies were evidently attempts at explanation. Even though they were for the most part attempting to explain "what was more true than plain" by inventing theories which were "more plain than true," yet they were explanations, and, intellectually, many of them, if not all of them, were easier than the orthodoxy at which the church arrived. "So it has come about that while such simplifications as those of the Arians, for example, are so alien and impossible to the modern mind that if they had been incorporated with Christianity they must have destroyed it, the doctrine of Christ's divinity still gives life to the millions of pious souls who are wholly ignorant both as to the controversy to which they owe its preservation, and the technicalities which its discussion involved."²

Indeed, there is a very remarkable passage in Hilary of Poitiers, to which too much attention cannot be given, wherein he lays the blame of all the uncouth terminologies and subtleties of the Christological debate at the door of the enemies of the faith. "Faithful souls would be content with the word of God, which bids us 'go teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.' But alas! we are driven by the fault of our heretical opponents to do things unlawful, to scale heights inaccessible, to presume where we ought not. And whereas it is by faith alone that we should worship the Father, and reverence the Son, and be filled with the

¹ "Foundations of Belief," 278, fn.

² Balfour, *ib.*

Spirit, we are obliged to strain our weak human language in the utterance of things beyond its scope; forced into this evil procedure by the evil procedure of our foes. Hence, what should be matter of silent religious meditation must now needs be imperilled by exposition in words."¹

In the New Testament—we are here following closely the statement of Hase in his admirable compendium, "Hutterus Redivivus"—the divine nature of Christ, as well as His human nature, was stated and acknowledged by faith. But in the New Testament there was not a whisper regarding the way in which the two natures are joined or related the one to the other. The idea of such a union is so sublime and so subtle that simple faith had to be succeeded by reflection and debate, and many contradictory alternatives had to be explored before the union of the divine and the human nature could be stated in a reasonable formula. Difficulties and heresies arose in two different ways. Either (1) the divine or the human nature of our Lord was not fully recognised, or (2) their real union was prejudiced.

(b) The First Three Centuries.

The earliest period of the history of Christology covers the years of the conflict that raged around the first-mentioned type of heresy, that is, the heresy which denies either the human or the divine nature of Jesus. This period runs on from the earliest days of our era to the years 325 and 381, which saw the overthrow of Arianism. The *divine* nature of our Lord was denied by the Ebionites, who held fast to the idea of a human Messiah as that was represented among the Jews. The *human* nature of our Lord was repudiated by the Gnostics, who, in their dislike of everything material and corporeal, were all more or less Docetists. They carried this prejudice to such lengths that they declared Christ's body to be simply a phantasm, or they maintained that it was a heavenly thing which fled this earth before the indignity of the crucifixion, and left a mortal substitute to die on Calvary.

¹ Cf. Illingworth, "Divine Immanence," 152.

The ancient Fathers resisted both these extremes. They were, however, in the habit of thinking exclusively about Christ's work on earth, and therefore, they were led to say that the Son was inferior to the Father. Pfeleiderer,¹ in attempting to sketch the opinion of Origen, says that "in virtue of the beginningless character of the Son which is grounded in the immutable character of God, He (Jesus) stands above all creatures, shares in the perfect nature of the Father, and is therefore directly called God. But as the Son begotten by the Father, who has the principle of His being not in Himself but in the Father, He is subordinate to the Father as all creatures, and is Himself called creature." In the view of Origen, therefore, there is evidently a contradiction—Jesus is both equal and subordinate to the Father. These two hostile views, which Origen managed somehow to reconcile in his own mind, or whose hostility he did not recognise, became more fiercely divergent, till the crisis came in the titanic conflict of Arius and Athanasius. Arius understood the metaphor of Christ's Sonship as meaning that the Father was anterior to Christ in time. Athanasius understood it as meaning that God and Christ were the same in kind.² In the tremendous debate Athanasius prevailed, and the creed of the Church confessed the true divinity of our Lord.

The older Fathers represented the union of the two natures in a popular way. The *divine* nature constituted Christ's spiritual being, and the *human* nature was represented by His flesh. But Tertullian and Origen contended that Jesus had a true human soul. The perfectly human character of His whole nature, body and spirit, was held against the Arians and the Semi-Arians, both of whom were called 'apsychoi,' and against Apollinaris, who represented a mediating view. Apollinaris the Younger declared that the Son of God in His incarnation assumed the human body and soul, while the divine 'logos' supplied the place of the human 'nous,' the rational mind. This doctrine was condemned at Constantinople in 381—it was held to deny the true human nature of Christ.

¹ "Philosophy and Development of Religion," II., 268.

² Gwatkin, "Knowledge of God," II., 107.

(c) The Second Three Centuries.

The next period of roughly three centuries lasted up to the overthrow of the Monotheletes in 680. It includes the struggle against the second sort of error mentioned above, namely, the heresy which prejudiced the true union of the two natures in the person of Christ. Nestorius, patriarch of Constantinople, taught a sort of moral collocation of the two natures, and not a union. He was accused of exaggerating the difference of the two natures in Christ so far as to make two persons, a human person in the flesh and a divine person in the 'logos.' Nestorius was condemned and deposed at the Council of Ephesus in 431. Eutyches rushed over to the other extreme, and declared that the two natures were so fused in Christ that there was really but one nature. But this Monophysite view was condemned at Chalcedon in 451 by a Council which maintained the separateness of the two natures and the unity of the Person of Christ. A sort of compromise, which declared for the two natures, but with only one will, was favoured by the court of Constantinople. But this Monothelete compromise was set aside at the Council of Constantinople in 680. The orthodox formula was two distinct natures in one person.

(d) Up to the Reformation.

The third period, from 680 up to the time of the Reformation, did but follow out the conclusions of the Councils in a scholastic fashion, elaborating the distinction of the two natures and the community of the attributes, with strong emphasis on the divine nature.

(e) Since the Reformation.

The fourth period saw the apostolic doctrine wrought out to a finished dogma, at least for the Lutheran Church, by the theory of a '*communicatio idiomatum*.' This ominous piece of scholasticism gave the attribute of omnipresence to the human nature of Christ, a view to which Luther was forced by the peculiar position he maintained regarding the Lord's Supper. The Reformed Church, however, would not admit this '*communicatio idiomatum*.' The utmost that Calvin would concede was that "to the Person of Christ

must be ascribed the properties of both natures, most closely united ; but an actual transference of the properties of the divine nature to the human nature appeared to him as inconceivable without an annihilation in principle of all that constitutes the essence of the latter."¹

IV. SOME POLEMICS.

Doubtless, if it were not for some solemn sense of the greatness of the issues that are at stake, most people of our day would not be bothered with this Christological controversy and its history. The whole controversy is worlds away from the centres of our interest, and there are moods and persons that will dismiss the whole thing as a very masterpiece of the kingdom of futilities. It sounds like talk in a region where no one can form clear ideas, where, consequently, talking must appear like the confounding of confusion. But we hold fast to the conviction that there must be some sense behind all the whirling passion and noise of the councils, and if we have patience and a stout heart we may perhaps be rewarded in the end by some result big enough to compensate us for enduring what is certainly exhausting and seemingly profitless.

There is no intention here to "reply" to the many critics who have assailed the doctrine of our Lord's divinity. One may be very doubtful if any good ever came, or could come, from those public debates which were so popular some decades ago between Secularist and Christian champions. But it would not be fair to our subject if we altogether ignored the stock-in-trade of the usual critic and the conventional rejoinder of the Christian apologist.

(a) New Testament emphasis on the Humanity of Christ.

If it be objected that the New Testament always speaks about Jesus as if He were a man, if it is insisted upon that the New Testament takes care to state expressly that He *was* a man, then the rejoinder of the debating theologian, if he wishes to score a point, is obvious. It has never been denied in the orthodox world that Jesus was human, and it is no manner of marvel that all sorts of peculiarities of the

¹ Van Oosterzee, "Dogmatics," 523.

human physiology and psychology are attributed to Him. (Matt. 4, 2 ; 8, 24 ; 20, 28 ; 26, 38). But all this only helps to enhance the difficulty. Why need we be told that He was a man, if he was *only* a man?

(b) Jewish Monotheism and Christ's Divinity.

Again, the apostles were monotheists of the most uncompromising sort, and it is held that it could never have been possible for them to call Jesus God. That would have been the contradiction of the loudest teaching of the Old Testament. It would have meant divorcing the Jew from the very belief which was built into the last fibre of his being. It would have been creating an intellectually absurd position, making the Creator into His own creature. But, on the other hand, we have to notice that if the church did call Jesus God the church also claimed that it was not departing by the thinnest hairsbreadth from the monotheism of the prophets. There is no doubt that the earliest Christians prayed to Jesus, and the necessary conclusion from that one fact is that the Christians were as flagrant idolaters as the Israelites who danced about the golden calf, unless they regarded prayer to Jesus as prayer to God.

(c) The Habit of Apotheosis in Jesus' Time.

Again, it is alleged that the apotheosis of Jesus is simply a misunderstanding of the expressions used for the Messianic dignity, or the result of the idealising of His Person which was effected by the Gnostic speculation in John's Gospel, or a conclusion facilitated and encouraged by the influence of Greek polytheism with all its incarnations and apotheoses. Wernle,¹ for instance, accounts for the divinity of Christ by referring, firstly, to the inordinate appetite among ancient peoples for the miraculous—"without the belief in miracles, no divinity of Christ!"—and, secondly, by marshalling the numerous gods of the heathen world and parading the easy faculty of the time in the manufacture of new gods to compete with the old gods and to overthrow them. "In opposition to the older gods Jesus appeared as

¹ "Anfänge," 3, 294.

the new, stronger God. This is the meaning of the 'divinity' of Christ. It grew up on heathen soil and it must be conceived as a set-off to the gods of the heathen world."

Critics, then, like Wernle, conceive in the simplicity of their souls that it explains the honour which the church paid to her divine Lord if they only direct our attention to the fact that deification was a vogue, that the thing was in the air. One accounts for a Victorian baronetcy by producing the list of "birthday honours." And, presumably, one has to account for the divinity of Jesus by saying that from Cæsar to Constantine sixty persons in all were promoted to divine titles and honours.

Now the fact is that these pagan apotheoses, instead of easing our problem, seem to make it harder. Of course, it is only an assertion to tell us that the doctrine of Christ's divinity grew up on 'heathen' soil. So far as we know, Jewish Christians were as ready as Greek Christians to pray to Jesus and to give Him the title and reverence of God. An odd god or two added to their pantheon made little difference to the Romans: they made their lords into gods as easily as we make commoners into lords. But with a people like the Jews, to whom monotheism was dearer than life itself, it was altogether a different thing to speak about promoting a man to the dignity of godhead. Besides the fact that the deity ascribed to Jesus was different *toto coelo* from the deity accorded to dead and living emperors, it has to be noticed that either statecraft or mere flunkeyism might account for the assumption of imperial persons into the circle of the gods, but every such argument leaves untouched the question why a peasant should have had divine honours offered to Him, why, even so early as the days in which the New Testament was written, prayers should have been offered in the name of Jesus, and to Him. "If the doctrine of the Person of Christ were explicable as the mere mythical apotheosis of Jesus of Nazareth, it would become the most insolent and fateful anomaly in history."¹

(d) Ebionitism, the earliest Christology.

Again, it has been maintained that the type of Christo-

¹ Fairbairn, "Philosophy of the Christian Religion," 17.

logical doctrine which, as we have already seen, prevailed among the Ebionites was the earliest type of doctrine regarding our Lord's Person. It is maintained that the earliest followers of Jesus held Him to be Messiah, but not God. Now we ought to be very careful how we fling about assertions regarding the Ebionites and their influence on the doctrine of the church. There is no sense in driving the debate into a dim region where one person may deny with the same right as another person asserts that so-and-so was the first effort of the Christian Church at formulating a doctrine regarding her Lord's Person. But—and this is a point on which we propose to lay a great deal of emphasis later on—even if Ebionitism was the first effort of the church to arrive at some dogmatic understanding of Christ's Person, that was a creed that did not wear, that would not carry the weight of the facts of the case, and it had to be discarded.

(e) Union of the Human and Divine Unthinkable.

Lastly, it has been alleged that the union of the divine and the human nature in one subject flouts all the known laws of thought. It is the inconceivable union of the finite and the absolute. Of course, the Christian apologist does not contend for a moment that he can show how the divine nature interpenetrates and occupies the human nature in the same sort of way as we can show how steam-power inhabits the engine by which it works and in which it is manifested. But the inconceivable and the impossible are not always the same. An infinite spirit dwells in our finite bodies—we do not know how. The mode of that indwelling baffles explanation, baffles even investigation. The fact of it is beyond question. We do not know how thought is related to the matter of the brain—that it is related, a thousand facts and the one supreme fact of death amply prove. How the divine and the human nature abide together in Christ is a thing unexplained, inexplicable. But we are going on to see that the doctrine of Christ's divinity is the only doctrine that can bring us a religious relief, and we may say now that, if this doctrine does bring us such comfort, we need not be driven away from that satisfaction by the

allegation of intellectual absurdity. We may be face to face with the mysterious, but we are not by any means flung up against the impossible.

Now we pass away, with not a little sense of relief, from this polemical matter. This ding-dong of charge and rejoinder may furnish the occasion when the brainy man can dazzle people with his supple cleverness, but the mere tactics and finesse of debate do not provide much hope that the starving soul will find satisfaction. The remark which we were led to make at the end of the last paragraph seems to lead us forward to a more hopeful kind of consideration. But before we follow out that line of thought one or two casual remarks may be allowed. It would be tedious to note how the philosophical theologians, like Schleiermacher, have idealised the dogma of Christ's divinity and attempted in that way to find the deeper meaning of what was contained in the dogma. No doubt, without the doctrine of the divinity of Christ, Christianity would never have conquered the world. "If we may reason from the processes of collective experience to law in history, we may say that two things are certain, viz. (1) that without the personal charm of the historical Jesus, the oecumenical creeds would never have been formulated or tolerated, and (2) that without the metaphysical conception of Christ, the Christian religion would long ago have ceased to be."¹ No doubt we discover in the dogma of Christ's divinity the dignity of that human nature which God Himself was not ashamed to wear. No doubt this doctrine gives God a nearness and an attraction which otherwise He would have lacked. No doubt the greatness of God was seen at its greatest when He humbled Himself and walked this earth, a man among men. All these things are true and worthy of grateful and extended consideration. But we hurry forward to what we think is a more hopeful consideration.

V. CHRISTOLOGY AND THE EXPERIENCE OF REDEMPTION.

One might venture to assert that no sentence could be more remarkable, not merely for its sturdy sense, but also

¹ Fairbairn, "Phil. of the Chr. Relig.," 4.

for being found in such a dry, theological work, than the statement in old Hase's "*Hutterus Redivivus*"¹ that "the highest knowledge of Christ is not to be found in the formula wherein the divine incarnation has been embodied, but *in gratefully acknowledging and receiving the redemption* brought to us by that incarnation." It is on this that we stand. It is the experience of Christ in redemption which is the very essence of Christianity. It is the interpretation of this experience which both necessitates the Christological controversy and gives a meaning and a seemliness to a debate which, otherwise, would have been more senseless than the howling of madmen at the full of the moon.

The doctrine, then, of Christ's divinity is not easy, if we may insist on the cardinal statement which we have newly made. Indeed, were it not for the pressure of the Christian experience that lies behind us we would be scared away from the long debate regarding Christ's Person by its insuperable intellectual difficulties and by the weary jargon which it has coined.² The offence of the doctrine arises almost wholly from the fact that the critics come down upon the church's formula without any personal experience of the miracle of redemption which the church had to explain. It was no subtle process of Greek dialectic, it was no manoeuvre of foxy churchmen, it was no ukase of an imperial and imperious patron that led the church to the dogma of Christ's divinity. It was simply reflection on her own rapturous experience, and the search for some adequate explanation for her feeling of triumphant power. In the beginning it was their wonderful experience of new life in communion with Jesus that led the disciples to the conviction that He was the Messiah, that He was the Son of God. And afterwards it was their joyous emancipation in the great adventure of faith in Christ that led the first believers, after exploring all easier and more obvious solutions, to declare that no honour was too precious, no wonder too wild and no power too great to be attributed to Him who opened up the transcendent life to all His followers. The impression which lived in them testified to the marvellous power of

¹ 204.

² Cf. Carnegie Simpson, "Fact of Christ," 209.

Him from whom it came."¹ If proof of the divinity of Christ is demanded, therefore, the proof cannot be conclusive except to those who have some experience of the joy and the enlargement of the new life in Christ, some similar experience, that is, to that which first led to the formulation of that great doctrine. "The deity of Christ cannot be explained to the man in the street, or to the sage in the chair, but only to the evangelical experience."²

(a) Reasoning from the Experience of Salvation.

Now, since we have reached this point, it will be profitable to hark back to the statement of Mr. Balfour. The church's doctrine was not explanatory, but declaratory. The heresies were all explanations, and, as we saw, they were all, intellectually and for the time, easier to believe than the church's dogma. It was another case of trying to explain what was "more true than plain" by opinions which were more "plain than true." But all these explanations, with all their plausibility and all their appeal to the logical and empirical intellect, failed to do justice to that basal experience which Christian theology was trying to state in adequate terms. The kernel of the difficulty seems to lie right here, that Christian doctrine was attempting to do justice to the Christian experience, while the critics were trying to do justice to logic and metaphysics. If the intellect and the experience seemed to clash, then the Christians preferred to follow the mandate of their priceless experience, while the critics bowed to what appeared to them to be the imperative of 'reason.' The logical and metaphysical difficulties are nothing, or very little, to him who has to account to himself for the sublime experience of redemption and moral victory. But, of course, without the imperious experience, the objections to a God-Man are simply insuperable. The experience of redemption is a despotic one. It cannot admit of any other explanation than that in Christ God actually gave *HIMSELF*, that Christ gives the believer all he needs, and that God could not have done more for the sinner than Christ has actually done. To the man without this mastering experience all the history of Christology

¹ Seeberg, "Grundwahrheiten," 108.

² Forsyth, "Person and Place of Jesus Christ," 94.

must appear a mere logomachy, a saturnalia of babble. The difficulty is not merely that the believer and his critics are speaking different languages, but that they live in different worlds, so that the 'laws of thought,' which for the one are supreme and unquestionable, are superseded for the other by a higher necessity than logical accuracy and metaphysical consistency. "As we follow the controversies, intricate and long-drawn as they were, we have evidence that the dominant interest was not to know, or to speculate for the sake of knowing or speculating, but rather to proscribe modes of thought which were felt to affect the Christian salvation and to define the truth in the way which was felt most effectively to support and ensure the blessings of redemption."¹

(b) Reasoning from Metaphysical Considerations.

This explains, as we have seen, where all the trouble rose. The believer, setting out from his high and glad experience, maintained Christ's divinity, without being able to dovetail that divinity into the humanity which Jesus shares with other men. What the Christian doctrine wished to establish was that there had been a union of God and man in Christ in order that there might be a union of God and man in the redemption of the sinner. But the unbeliever came down on the problem of Christ's Person with a cut-and-dry, *à priori*, metaphysical definition of God, and he found it resounding nonsense to speak about Christ's divinity, unless in some sense that made 'divinity' the possession or the possibility of every man. "If we say that Jesus was God, are we not affirming something which in its very nature is an impossibility, a self-contradiction, an absurdity?"¹ The Unitarian who asks this question thinks that he establishes his case by defining God as the uncreated, eternal, infinite, omnipresent, omniscient Being, and by showing, in the next place, that Jesus was created, that He was born at a certain time and in a certain place, that He was a babe and lay in a cradle, that He was confined to one place, and that there were things which, on His own confession, He did not know. Then our critic, dealing

¹ Paterson, "Rule of Faith," 204.

¹ J. T. Sutherland, "Was Jesus God?" 3.

always with his metaphysical categories, produces his culminating objection, which evidently appears to him something of a smashing operation against the forces of orthodoxy, "If God was confined in a human body in Palestine for thirty years, who carried on the affairs of the world and the universe during that time?" When our critic had arrived at this monster of absurdity he ought to have been aware that he was guilty both of misunderstanding and mis-statement, that he was both ignorant and unfair, that he was engaged in the thriftless business of trying to impale a ghost.

The metaphysician builds up in his laboratory a synthetic definition of God and then he comes forth with this measuring line in his hand to tell us that Jesus does not conform to the specification-schedule of divinity. But the Christian really begins with Jesus, and he defines God analytically, by what he sees in Jesus. It is the study of Christ that gives us the model by which we are to build up our conception of the inner nature of the Divine.¹ And if there are any attributes essential to the character of God which the Christian's experience does not warrant him in ascribing to Christ, as, for instance, a metaphysical infinity and eternity, the Christian will boldly claim these for Christ rather than imperil the one explanation which explains the miracle of his redemption and his moral renewal. It was a right instinct therefore both in Schleiermacher and in Ritschl, that made these writers display first of all the benefits and blessings derived from Christ and then proceed in the sight of these to discuss the question of His Person. Undoubtedly this is the only legitimate proceeding—the Person of Christ must be discussed in the light of the Christian experience.

VI. THE MOVEMENT TO, AND THE MOVEMENT FROM CHRIST'S DIVINITY.

The consideration which has just now been before us is probably sufficient to show why the Christological controversy has been kept up so long and with such bitterness. In the very nature of things the parties could never under-

¹ "Foundations," 29.

stand each other. The controversy was like a dispute about colour between seeing men and blind.

All that remains for us to do now is to show that the generalisation to which we have already referred is a correct one. The church was offered explanation after explanation of the Person of Christ, each of them easy, at least easier than the orthodox view. It was not, either, as if the leaders of the church, through mere obstinacy and disregard of the consequences, persisted in espousing a view which shocked the logical mind. Augustine himself confesses the perplexity of these disputes and the inadequacy of the words that the dispute was compelled to handle—"We say three persons, not because we have found the right word, but because silence is worse."¹

There is, then, what we may call a centripetal tendency, an inward, radial movement. The church, guided by her living and despotic experience, was carried back right to the doctrine of Christ's divinity before she could find any satisfactory explanation of her power and her place in the world.

But we shall have to take note of another movement later in the history of the doctrine of the Person of Christ, a negative movement, a movement which left the central repose which the church had found in the dogma of Christ's divinity. Those who began this centrifugal movement thought that something just a trifle less mysterious than the doctrine of the God-Man would do, that outside the circle of the church's belief, but not too far outside, there might be found intellectual as well as religious rest. But we shall have to see that that hope, if it ever was held and definitely expressed, was doomed to utter disappointment. Once the centre of rest, to which the church with so much struggle and sorrow had attained, was abandoned, the downward forces were found to be irresistible, and the movement could not stop itself till it had reached the last depth of agnostic bewilderment and despair.

(a) The Centripetal Movement.

1. The New Testament Texts.

If now we wish to see the long sweep of that inward

¹ Cf. Paterson, "Rule of Faith," 227.

movement which carried the confession of the church from the outward purlieus of a humanitarian view right on to the holy citadel and shrine of Christ's divinity, we must begin with some review of the New Testament texts. The Westminster Confession has these words about our Lord's Person, "Two whole perfect and distinct natures, the Godhead and the manhood, were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition or confusion." The most important of the texts adduced as 'proofs' for these theological propositions are these: (1) "The Word was God," John 1, 1; (2) "Who being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God," Phil. 2, 6—in this text the Revised Version reads, "*counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God*"; (3) "In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the godhead bodily," Col. 2, 9; (4) "Whose are the fathers and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever," Rom. 9, 5—the Revised Version has a note here which says, "Some modern interpreters place a full stop after *flesh*, and translate, *He who is God over all be (is) blessed for ever*, or, *He who is over all is God, blessed for ever*. Others punctuate, *flesh, who is over all. God be (is) blessed for ever*;" (5) "God was manifest in the flesh," 1 Tim. 3, 16—the Revised note here says, "The word *God* in place of *He who* rests on no sufficient ancient evidence. Some authorities read *which*."

We can say two things about these 'proof' texts; firstly, that some of them have had their 'proof' quality totally destroyed by generally accepted criticism, and, secondly, that while the statements on which the Westminster divines profess to base their formula logically involve the Confession's doctrine they by no means put it in a definite and dogmatic form. It is clear that the New Testament insists on the pre-existence of Christ. It is quite true that the attempt to interpret the New Testament on a Unitarian or Socinian basis has completely broken down.¹ But it required time to show that a Unitarian exegesis was hopeless, and we are not unwilling, even with the New Testament before us, to believe that the first rude attempt at a scientific treatment of the question of Christ's Person was of an

¹ Gwatkin, "Knowledge of God," II., 108; Cf. Denney, "Christian Doc. of Recon." 98.

Ebionite or Humanitarian character.¹

2. Ebionitism.

If it is possible and not improbable, then, that the first attempt at a Christology was of an Ebionite or humanitarian character, we are face to face with a fact too striking to be passed over lightly. We have already seen in the very striking passage from Hilary that the early church was driven by the exigencies of discussion and apologetic into Christological theorising. Everybody has felt the situation described by the old Latin tag, *Si non rogas intelligo*. For instance, one has said, "It is not hard to know God, provided one does not force oneself to define Him."² Similarly the early Christian church felt that the Christological debate dealt with things which the spirit knew but which language could not express without making some caricature of the abiding certainties of the spirit. Now we have to go on to see another fact which surely must to some extent mitigate the harshness of our judgments upon the whole Christological discussion, the fact, namely, that Christology began with making a *minimum* claim for Christ. If the facts of the case would have permitted it, the earliest theologians were willing to leave Jesus among other men, his one distinction, perhaps, being his primacy among the prophets. He might have been a religious genius indeed, whose moral stature dwarfed all other men, but if He did excel them, His was only a superiority in qualities which were common to Him and them. He did not excel other men, on the Ebionite view, as angels excel men, but only as the gifted excel the mediocre among the children of time.

If this view is at all near the truth we cannot dwell too long upon the fact that Christological science began with such very modest pretensions. Those who are loudly impatient of the wilful obscurantism of the church ought to remember that in dealing with the supreme problem of Christ's Person the church did not fly away at once into any realm of mystery and magic and unreason. The church, actually, began by considering a solution of her problem

¹ Cf. Cairns, "Christianity in the Modern World," 155.

² Cf. Fosdick, "Meaning of Faith," 63.

which at the bar of the coldest logic must have been adjudged unexceptionable.

If the supposition that Jesus is only a moral hero, a sublime prophet, a genius in the realm of the spirit, could ever have been solid enough to carry the weight of the facts, the church would willingly have made that statement her doctrine. But under the stress of the facts the Ebionite conception was crushed out of existence. It is not merely that the interpretation of the New Testament is impossible on an Ebionite basis. All those who have ever given a passing thought to the matter are agreed that the Ebionite view was not wrong in its assertion, but only in its silence. The Ebionite view began travelling in the right direction, but it stopped too soon. Jesus, it is true, is the world's great prophet. He is Messiah, all the Messiah that the Jewish nation will ever see. He proclaimed and He illustrated in His own character a morality which the world has never seen seriously disputed. But the experience of the Cross, the knowledge of what Jesus Himself, with all His humility, claimed to be, and the thrilling discovery of what He has done in reconciling men to God made the Ebionite view, after a short trial, evidently inadequate. The Church was forced onward to meet, as best she could, all the rational difficulties which became inevitable when her sublime experience compelled her to abandon the humanitarian position in regard to her Lord's Person.

3. Arianism.

If there was ever a time in the history of the Church when Ebionitism was thought sufficient it did not last long. In spite of the difficulties which were bound to arise in connection with our Lord's true humanity, the Church was soon compelled to say that while He is truly man, Jesus is something more than man. But, how much more? If the unity of Christ's own nature may for a while have kept the Church's thought at an Ebionite level, undoubtedly the jealously guarded conception of the Divine Unity kept the Church for a much longer period from calling Jesus God. This was the Arian stage, and to this, at least, the thought of the Church was irresistibly pushed forward by the pres-

sure of her experience. Our Lord is a superhuman Being. He existed before His birth on earth. He is the First and the Highest of all creatures, but He is a creature.¹ He is "God's Plenipotentiary, His superhuman Chancellor, the most private Secretary of His eternal praise, and so far invested with power and prestige."

The critics of the Church ought to give serious regard to another great fact. The Church examined Dynamistic Monarchianism, which made Christ to be born a man and then promoted Him to the godhead by adoption, and Modalistic Monarchianism, which made the Father and the Son the same deity in different modes or manifestations, only to repudiate both. It is worth noticing that the Dynamistic view "is credibly ascribed to Hermas," and that carries it well back into the second century.² The Church, we have already seen, experimented with an Ebionite doctrine, in order to save Christ's true humanity, and now we are seeing that the Church experimented with other positions, the Arian for instance, in order to save the unity of the godhead. It may be that the apostle John, as a Christian, could not describe Jesus as a mere man, and it may be that, as a thinker, he could not describe Him as an intermediate deity. It may be, as Professor Carnegie Simpson says, that John "overleaped centuries of discussion" when he declared that the Word was God.³ But whatever we may maintain about the date or the significance of John's conclusions or intuitions, it is very memorable that the Church did not resort immediately, in spite of the Johannine expressions on which Dr. Simpson lays such great stress, to the supremely difficult doctrine of the two natures in one Person till that doctrine after the assay and elimination of all easier alternatives had become inevitable. In this connection it is very interesting to notice, in passing, that Dr. Cunningham in his "Historical Theology"⁴ tells us that Petavius thought that all the Fathers of the second and third century were Arians.

Principal Forsyth, to whom our obligations have already

¹ Candlish, "Christian Doctrine of God," 111.

² Paterson, "Rule of Faith," 208.

³ "Fact of Christ," 111.

⁴ I., 269.

been many and great, puts the whole process of events in a very striking way. "If in the first, or Socinian, stage, Christ appeared as God's perfect prophet, in the second, or Arian, stage, He appears as God's Plenipotentiary. What more do we want? Have we not explained the greatness of Christ? No, not yet. We want in Christ God's real presence. . . In the first stage, Christ is the *MAN*: in the second, He is the *SUPERMAN*. We must ascend to the supernal man, *THE LORD FROM HEAVEN*."¹

4. Athanasianism.

So we see that the Church did not reach the doctrine of Christ's perfect divinity without a sore and a long-sustained struggle.² The authority of the New Testament did not make it an urgent and immediate duty to call Christ perfectly divine, and the very opposition of cold reason made it an adventure of the gravest risk to address Jesus by a divine title. It was the inadequacy of all other explanations, it was the pressure of the experience of redemption through Jesus Christ that carried the Church onward to the heroic and satisfying confession of the divinity of her Lord.³ Selden merely uttered a criticism when he said that the doctrine of transubstantiation is "rhetoric turned into logic." And we are voicing nothing but an easy interpretation of an imposing history when we say that the Christian doctrine of Christ's Person is an experience crystallised in a creed.

We may now condense and conclude the whole matter in the words of Pfleiderer.⁴ Athanasius "acutely pointed out the contradiction in the conception of an intermediate, created God. But the really deciding motive which guided him lay in the religious necessity to establish the truth of the Christian redemption, or union of God and man, as a fact given in Christ. 'In order that we may be divine, God has become man.'"

¹ "Person and Place of Jesus Christ," 33.

² Cunningham, "Hist. Theol." I., 276.

³ Cf. Kirsop Lake, "The Stewardship of the Faith," 152.

⁴ "Philosophy and Development of Religion," II., 282.

(b) The Centrifugal Movement.

But the position attained with so much anguish was always with difficulty retained. Only to those who had the blithe and vivid experience of redemption in Christ was the doctrine of Christ's divinity a thing for triumphant proclamation. But experience soon ceased to be poignant, first-hand, romantic. Very soon we leave the battle-field and find ourselves in the study of the historian. Very soon we pass from life with its swift decisions and its rushing deeds to the class-room of the philosopher. Redemption ceased to be the experimental basis on which the theologians built up their systems. The Incarnation and the Person of Christ had to be debated not, as formerly, by looking within for reasons and facts, but by looking for them without. Theology became external, 'scientific,' dependent on the collection and the collation of second-hand and third-hand testimonies. The old, high, subjective ground could not be held. Men could not breathe the too exhilarating air of the summit. The descent began. What we have to notice now is that when the fall had once begun men found that they could not fall half-way down the precipice, that they were in the grip of a pitiless gravitation and had to go right to the bottom. Men tried to snatch at some intermediate rest, but their efforts were all mocked and the remorseless force with steady acceleration carried them down all the way to darkness and hurt. The only positions in which the equilibrium is stable are at the very top and the very bottom—there is no rest anywhere between.

For illustration of this statement we may refer to another writer to whom our obligations are not few. Dr. James Orr¹ has presented with great learning and impressiveness a line of thought which seems to be striking and convincing. Unless the contention of this writer can be confuted—and one does not see any refutation, one does not even guess the direction from which any possible refutation might be expected to come—there seems very little escape from the Athanasian position. The alternatives have all been explored, and the religious history of the world shows us that the final alternative to Athanasius is a creed and a fate from

¹ "Christian View of God and the World," 44.

which every instinct of the soul revolts.

1. From a Divine Christ to Humanitarianism.

The first alternative was between "a truly divine Christ and pure humanitarianism." Arianism was never able to maintain itself. It either swung backward to the orthodox position, or it swung forward to mere humanitarianism.¹ Socinianism itself has dropped all the old Unitarian contentions which allowed certain supernatural functions to Jesus. Schleiermacher's mediating view of Christ as the Ideal Man has been surrendered by all his disciples and they have either gone back again to orthodoxy or they have gone on in the way of heterodoxy to join hands with the humanitarians.

2. From a Divine Christ to Agnosticism.

But the drag of things would never suffer those who had adopted or inherited the humanitarian view to rest there. "Unitarianism is always in unstable equilibrium. It can speak of God and it can speak of man, but it cannot firmly link them together. Each in turn swallows up the other. On one side is the deistic phase, where God is all, and man is nothing: and this endangers the image of God without which experience can have no rational meaning. On the other hand is the pantheistic version, that man is as necessary to God as God to man; and this is destructive of religion. These are the Scylla and Charybdis of Unitarianism and no safe course between them has yet been found."²

The history of the Deistic movement from the eighteenth century downwards affords a very clear evidence that what was called 'natural' religion was a feeble, doomed affair. What Deism did was to cull a few flowers from the Christian garden where they were blowing vigorously in a congenial soil, and transplant them to a chill and inhospitable world where they immediately began to wilt and die. A belief in God and in a future life can be well maintained as elements in the system of Christianity. These beliefs,

¹ Cf. Orr, *ibid.* 309, Note B.

² Gwatkin, "Knowledge of God," I., 245.

as our American cousins say, "belong there." But, divorced from the gospel and set up as an independent system, they are like a limb cut off from the central organ which supplies it with the blood of life—they soon wither and mortify. The God of Deism was a blind and deaf God. He satisfied neither the head nor the heart. Men were thrust back from pure humanitarianism to pure agnosticism. A well-known sentence from Mr. Rathbone Greg, which has been copied into a dozen books, shows clearly that the liberal and humanitarian theology has an innate tendency to topple over on the side of Agnosticism. All the length that Mr. Greg will go is to say that he holds on to the personal conception of God handed down from ancient times rather than to any of the modern substitutes for God. "It may be," he says, "that such a personal God is a mere anthropomorphic creation. It may be that the conception of such a being is demonstrably a self-contradictory one. But, at least, in resting in it, I rest in something I almost seem to realise; at least I share the view which Jesus indisputably held of the Father whom He obeyed, communed with, and worshipped."¹ Here is something which, if it is faith at all, has little of faith's carolling note of certainty. Here is something which has too much "almost" and "may be" in it. This is a bankrupt creed. It has little to give and nothing to get from the world. It has no assurance to offer us about God or about ourselves, and all those who take sides under Mr. Greg's leadership, if such a leadership ever had enough enthusiasm to desire any following at all, must be reconciled to a hopeless agnosticism. It is a task like trying to stand on the quicksand if one tries to live on a faith in God which is only a hazy peradventure, an anthropomorphic creation, a figment derided by all philosophy, a Being who is "something I almost seem to realise," to whom we are attached by mere atavism or inertia. Besides, is there much sense in clinging to the sort of God that Jesus worshipped if we have in other directions, with Mr. Greg, cancelled out most of the items in His title to respect and distinction?

¹ "Creed of Christendom," 90.

3. From the Divine Christ to Pessimism.

But even there we cannot stop. The alternative, finally, is between a divine Christ and Pessimism. Agnosticism is only a half-way house where the convicts tarry on the road to the soul's Siberia. When men turn away from the Son of God and from the land of hope and beauty which He reveals, they are driven on, like men goaded with a curse, till they reach a dim, lorn world, where everything is hollow and tottering, where men and morals have lost the old majesty, where pulses are slow and cold, where despair has crushed out all ingenuity in discovery and all steadfastness in toil, where the known sorrow of to-day is as nothing compared with the sorrow that is dreaded for the morrow.

Denial reaches *THIS*. A bitter wail is heard rising from those who have left the sunny land and travelled all the way to the sunless land of unbelief. A dozen testimonies might be adduced.¹ Professor Clifford's words are so sad that they have startled the world's surprise and pity—"We have seen the sun rise out of an empty heaven to light up a sunless world; we have felt with utter loneliness that the Great Companion is dead." Renan's testimony is not much different from that of Professor Clifford.² He realised that his world was saved from the utter darkness only by the aftershine of a day that, for him, was dead. With the departure of the Christian faith, all the old dynamic and radiance are taken from life. "We are living," he declares, "on the perfume of an empty vase." Nietzsche, with his insane hate of the Sermon on the Mount, taught the German people to love and practise the ethic of the blonde beast, and so he helped to prepare the way for that riot of bombast and bloodshed which brought a calamity on Germany and the world unparalleled in history. Perhaps the pathos of loneliness and disappointment is nowhere so poignantly expressed as in the poem which Nietzsche appended to his "Beyond Good and Evil":

O noon of life! O second time of youth!

O summer garden!

Restless fate to stand and peer and wait,

I'm waiting for the friends both day and night,

The new friends. Come, O come! 'Tis time, 'tis time!

¹ Cf. Fosdick, "The Meaning of Faith," 124.

² Cf. Orr, "Christian View," 67.

It would not be very difficult and it might not be very profitable to multiply testimonies of despair from those, like Hardy and Pierre Loti and Dostoevsky, who would not stay with Jesus, who left Him only to find that the world around them was turned to desolation, and that every great desire, every great capacity within them was paralysed or dead.

VII. CONCLUSION.

In early life Thomas Carlyle was contemptuous about the Athanasian controversy. He was disgusted at the sight of passionate churchmen cursing each other and tearing the church to pieces "over a diphthong." In later life he came to see that in the old dispute Christianity itself was at stake, that if Arius had prevailed Christianity itself would have dwindled away to a legend. In the words of a competent scholar, the victory of Arianism "would have led Christianity back into paganism and Judaism—into paganism, in so far as it deifies a creature and abolishes the unity of God: and into Judaism, in so far as it makes the union of God and man impossible by the interpolation of a third being who is neither God nor man."¹

It was the experience of redemption that drove the church over a thousand difficulties to the doctrine of Christ's divinity.² But, more than that, it was the doctrine of Christ's divinity that kept the experience alive and strong, that made the experience not the privilege of a few but the hope and the stay of all. "It is not Jesus of Nazareth who has so powerfully entered into history. It is the deified Christ who has been believed, loved and obeyed as the Saviour of the world."³

The doctrine of Christ's divinity and the first conspicuous triumph of the Church were facts of the same day, and they were facts causally related. It is the Athanasian creed that alone is worth preaching, that alone is worth hearing. It is this creed that has produced the great preachers and the great revivals. It alone of all the world's messages has

¹ Pfleiderer, "Philosophy and Development of Religion," II., 282.

² Cf. Kelman, "War and Preaching," chap. II.

³ Fairbairn, "Philosophy of the Christian Religion," 15.

swept the souls of men like winds from the Paradise of God. By it alone has the Church vindicated her right to be the world's supreme moral power. Nobody's pulse ever quickens, not even by one poor beat in an hour, to hear Socinianism, and it is never as the fire in a man's very bones to preach Arianism. No man would ever think of inconveniencing himself, far less of making himself a gazing-stock or a martyr, for Schleiermacher's Ideal Man. But all down the ages the divine Christ has been the glorious theme of apostles and martyrs, the church's resistless leader, the world's Friend, most loving and most loved. Intellectually easy views of Christ's Person may prevail in days of religious decadence and moral imbecility. But these are diseases which always work their own cure. From the blackest night the world swings into the day. The souls of men will not endure negations and apologetics—they will have the grand assertions and the thrilling risks and certainties of faith. Men will fight their way through, from pessimism, from agnosticism, from humanitarianism, back till they find Him who is the Redeemer, and in the joyous experience of that redemption which He brings and assures they will cry out in the confessional words of Thomas, "My Lord and my God!"

Hastie, John Stewart.

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1. Lord's prayer. I. Title.

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